JESUS THE REFORMER

EDWARD McLELLAN

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JESUS THE REFORMER

THE TWENTY-NINTH HARTLEY LECTURE:

JESUS *the* REFORMER

By
EDWARD McLELLAN

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To
MY FATHER AND MOTHER
WHO SACRIFICED MUCH:
TO MY WIFE
WHOSE SPIRIT HAS NEVER FAILED:
AND TO MY CHILDREN
WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN OTHER THAN A JOY—
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds ;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity ;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.

Francis Thompson : *The Hound of Heaven.*

PREFACE.

THE aim of this lecture is to show how great a debt social reformers owe to Jesus. It is the fashion in some quarters to regard religion and the Church as anti-social, and to look upon both as alien to the spirit of reform. There have been times when if such an accusation had been made it would have been difficult to refute it, but those times are in the past. There are no influences at work to-day which are more truly or more whole-heartedly reform movements than the religion and the Church which set Jesus in the midst.

When religion and the Church have been otherwise it has been because they have lost sight of their Leader and His teaching. Decay has crept in when man has turned away from a principle to trifle with an interpretation, or forsaken a duty to

play with a symbol. Stagnation has followed these turnings-aside from the life-force, and putrefaction has followed stagnation. Because of these periods of aberration many have concluded that there was nothing vital in the faith, and that social reform was of spontaneous and independent growth.

That is not true. As the reader will discover, every great movement which has given a fuller life to man was inspired by the Master's teaching, and was begun and carried on by those who loved and served Him. Such men are to be found in all the centuries, and were never more prominent than when the Church was most decadent. Many of them were great saints as well as true philosophers for they knew that the secret of all reform lay in the reformation of the man himself. That is a truth which is often forgotten by the man in a hurry to reform the world, and needs constantly to be repeated. It is for that reason that in the earlier part of the lecture I have sought to show that there is a way for man to rise, and that he is capable of rising, however lowly he may be. For that reason, too, I have pointed out that of the great world-teachers only Jesus is adequate for what is required.

It has seemed to me that such a lecture would stimulate those eager to help their fellows by giving them a survey of the way in which reform has come. Of necessity I have consulted many authorities, and a list of the books I have found most helpful is printed on pages xv-xvi. I am particularly indebted to Samuel E. Keeble's *Christian Responsibility for the Social Order*, both for the valuable material it contains and for its introduction to other sources of information which I have found of the greatest help.

I am deeply conscious of the imperfections of this book, and I send it out with the greatest diffidence. My earnest hope is that it will strengthen the faith of some who believe that Jesus is indeed the Redeemer of the World, and encourage them to greater devotion in His service.

EDWARD McLELLAN.

London.
April, 1929.

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GLOVER : *Progress in Religion.*
BEIBITZ : *Belief, Faith, and Proof.*
LOVELL : *First Types of Christian Life.*
VEITCH : *The Early Christians.*
ANGUS : *Mystery Religions and Christianity.*
BETTANY : *World Religions.*
GRANT : *Religions of the World.*
CLODD : *Childhood of Religions.*
PEAKE : *Commentary on the Bible.*
CAIRD : *Evolution of Religion.*
MULLER : *Origin and Growth of Religion.*
JEVONS : *Religion in Evolution.*
SAYCE : *Origin and Growth of Religion.*
RAMSAY : *Church in the Roman Empire.*
FINLAY : *History of the Byzantine Empire.*
ASHLEY : *Economic History.*
ASHLEY : *Economic Organization of England*
JARRETT : *Mediæval Socialism.*
THORNDIKE : *Mediæval Europe.*
ROGERS : *Economic Nature of History.*
LECKY : *History of European Morals.*
MOZLEY : *Divine Aspect of History.*
CHURCH : *The Beginning of the Middle Ages.*
CHURCH : *The Gifts of Civilization.*

GREEN : *History of the English People.*
GUIZOT : *History of the English Revolution.*
GUIZOT : *History of Modern Civilization.*
JONES : *Spiritual Reformers.*
MATHESON : *Church and Social Problems.*
NOEL : *Socialism in Church History.*
LANG : *Church and its Social Mission.*
CECIL : *A Dreamer in Christendom.*
CUNNINGHAM : *Christianity and Politics.*
ORCHARD : *Christianity and World Problems.*
RAVEN : *Christian Socialism.*
KROPOTKIN : *Mutual Aid.*
HOBSON : *The Social Problem.* John Ruskin.
BALLARD : *Christian Reality in Modern Light.*
SMYTH : *Christian Ethics.*
JONES : *The Principles of Citizenship.*
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JESUS THE REFORMER.

CHAPTER I.

The Things We Dream Of.

THERE have been many dreamers about the Golden Age. Some of them have spun filmy webs of airy fancy, while others have woven their dreams into the closer textures of ordered and arranged life. Poets have sung songs of an Elysian felicity, and prophets have challenged their age with a clanging demand for men to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Some of their pourings-forth have been as dazzling as they have been elusive, or as irritating as they have been remote, but most of them have been charged with inspiration and have served their age as lamps for the feet of pilgrims journeying towards Utopia. Because of them many hands that would have hung down have been stretched out and up, and many knees that would have yielded to the heart-break of the climb have been strengthened for

another attack on the flinty height. We owe much to the dreamers—however impossible their dreams, however fantastic their theories, however impracticable their fancies. They have kept the light burning.

It is to the living altars of the past that pilgrims of to-day go to set aflame the torches they carry, for even practical, scientific, and materialistic men have dreams, as our fathers had. We garb ourselves more soberly: we clip our speech more sharply even as we have clipped our beards; we haste and hustle in our hurry to make, and send, and see, what is to be made, and sent, and seen: we extend ourselves by many inventions until a man is as a host and a city as a country; but, in spite of the brazen-throated growling of our machinery, and the oft-reiterated cry that we are men of sense and fact and have no faith in the phantasms of a rioting imagination whether of poet or prophet, we are all of us dreamers, every one. It is just as well. Our dreams keep us sane.

It may be true that for many the soaring is but a lowly one. There is scarcely a clearing of the house-top or the market-place. The spirit lumbers heavily, weighted by pots and pans, or the chattels of the money changers, but there are flashes which reveal the spirit unchained. The release is temporary but it is a release, and even though there is a swift hurrying back to the cells and the manacles, it is a proof of that something in man which now and again scorns them. It is because there is that something in man that man is what he is. To say

that he is not what he might be is but to admit that he has not reached his height, and a height which is seen ; and to pretend that he is no better than he was is to be blind to the path up which he has climbed.

But there are others. Still earth-bound if you will. Still dim of sight through appetite, or heavy of foot because of interest, but who rise above the house-tops and the foot-hills and see the high and distant peaks. They are none the less visionaries because they think in terms of law, nor are they any the less prophetic because they speak in terms of treaties and pacts. They are often humble of birth and lowly of station, and their words are rarely heard where potentates sit, nor do their deeds stir multitudes. The only throne for their feet is the soil out of which they have grown, and the only sceptres they wield are the tools by which men earn their bread, and yet it is because of that that hope grows strong and they do not dream in vain. For if such as these can dream then mountains may be shifted into the sea, and the days of miracles are not ended. It would be a poor chance for the world if its destiny lay only in the hands of those whose state was great, and whose emperorship came by birth and not by grace.

What is it, then, that these men look for in the time to come? In a sentence—The ending of war.

The Path to Peace.

The end of such wars as have been the subjects of mighty epics in the classical languages of men,

and whose heroes have been so brave and chivalrous that the records of their deeds stir the slowest blood to maddening racing. Wars that have torn down dynasties; sent kings, and czars, and emperors, to racks, and stakes, and scaffolds; and peoples into slavery. Wars between savage tribes such as have been fought out in the wilds; or between nations rich with an ancient culture, disputing for mastery, and which have devastated every continent under the sun, slain uncounted millions of men, and left behind a legacy of anguish and impoverishment under which many generations have groaned. Wars which have been hailed as victories and which have proved but a shambles in the garnering: which have been hailed as the breaking of a dawn only to prove to be the herald of a darker night. The story of man is vivid with the lurid record of many such jungle-like ferocities, and it is a dream that they should end.

But there are other wars not so easy to gauge because they are far less tangible. Wars where the clash is not over a material estate but over a thought, hardly definable often, and yet representing something so tremendous that its barriers are as unbreakable as the ridge of the Himalayas. Wars of caste, the brood sometimes of a philosophy or a religion, often of a racial pride, and not infrequently of an exaggerated and inflamed patriotism. None the less such wars, even though they do not break out into slaughter, can be most prolific of hate even though the aftermath is not one of pillaged homes and wasted fields.

Wars fruitful of implacable feuds and poisoned relationships, and which must as surely be eliminated as any other before there can be a brotherhood in the world and a true parliament of man.

But even then the tale is not fully told.

There are wars between man and man of the same faith, and age, and civilization. Conflicts where there is no clash of caste, or race, or even territory. Battles where the gauge is thrown down between men because of differences of birth, privilege, and pride. Battles between the strong and the weak, the fortunate and the unfortunate, the peer and the peasant, the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate. Such bitterness has been brewed by these outlawries as has poisoned the wells of many a century, and such wreckage of estate as has stopped the march of progress for a generation. It may be urged that out of such titanic struggles has come man's greater strength, making him fit for the greater fights on a higher plane. Be that as it may the time is ripe for them to cease, so that the gathered power may turn the wheels of a worthier mill.

If, therefore, our dreams are to come true, there must be an end of war between race and race, between caste and caste, between man and man. It does not mean the end of struggle. There can be no end to that. The Alps of our dreaming are not the ultimate Alps. "From age to age man's still aspiring spirit finds wider scope." We can never forget either the imagery or the fact of war so long as this struggle lasts; and go on it must

and will, in unending cycles, and thought cannot conceive of it as otherwise. But it is a different kind of war. To end the war between races, and castes, and men, the powers of light must wage incessant strife against the powers of darkness.

First and foremost it must be a war against a special kind of ignorance. Not lack of scholarship. Not want of letters or learning. This age has no monopoly of culture, nor is our race the only one that has known something of a scientific civilization. Peoples long since forgotten had their splendid days, and even we find it in us to stand and gape at what they knew and wrought. Farther back than Egypt, and India, and Mexico, there were those who probed at the mysteries, and sought the unknown. There can and does exist side by side with a culture which reaches out to the measurement of a sun, and knows how to interpret the fascinating mechanism of an atom, an ignorance so appalling as to make it possible for man's inhumanity to man to make countless thousands mourn.

And this is no new thing. It has been so through the centuries during which the unfolding of man's mind has revealed facets of dazzling brilliance. But there is a fundamental truth which runs deeper than race, or caste, or class, and which alone possesses the power to dissolve their differences while securing to them the priceless and inalienable right of their independences, and it is that One is our Master and all we are brethren. Upon the winning of the fight against the darkness which

hides this truth from the knowledge of men, and upon its full interpretation, everything depends. We cannot abolish crime without it. We cannot abolish tyranny without it. We cannot abolish poverty without it. We cannot abolish disease without it. It is the rock truth on which alone a peaceful and peaceable civilization can be built. It is at the same time the warrant of the faith that is within us, and the promise and prophecy of its triumph.

And here the cynic will smile his dry and complacent smile, and say: "The old, old story—and how pitiful!" He may quote Plato, who said: "War is the natural relation of every community to every other." He may even quote another ancient who said: "Every man is a wolf to every other man." Viscount Bryce quotes these authors in his *International Relations*, but he does not leave it at that. He acknowledges that there was a time when, in a "state of nature," every man was a wolf to every other man; but that ceased when the race became civilized, and every individual man came under the control of law. He admits that independent political communities, whatever their form, are in this "state of nature" toward every other community. They stand outside law, each community owning no control but its own, recognizing no legal rights to other communities and owing to them no legal duties, except such as have been mutually agreed upon, or which the public opinion of the world imposes. But even then the subject is not ended. We have

made great strides in amending the "state of nature" within communities, by the building up of a system of laws based upon consent. Is it not possible so to amend the "state of nature" between States that a similar good can be registered? That depends. But upon what does it depend? Viscount Bryce answers the question by saying: ". . . in the last resort the question is one of the moral progress of the individual men who compose the communities. Communities are nothing at all except so many individual men, and human nature will advance no further in communities taken as wholes than the members of the communities themselves advance. And this is the reason why those who seek to improve human society must begin by working as individuals; not to throw the responsibility upon communities but to remember that the community is what the men and women make it." This opinion, from one of the great international minds of our time, is in clear support of the assertion that the primary war to be waged is against a particular kind of ignorance which glooms the minds of the nations of the earth.

A further confirmation is obtained when we try to estimate the causes which have led the peoples to war. There are many minor differences to be found, but running sinister through them all have been the twin promptings of suspicion and fear. And usually the men so warped have been but a few of those who later have been involved. It is just as true to say that during the great periods

when there was comparative peace in the world, that peace was kept because of a few who were secure in their power and authority—as when the Roman Empire was in its strength, or during the time when the Church held the bridge for peace. But earlier—when war was considered the natural relation between communities, and the law of the jungle still ran among men—and later, when the wars of religion broke out between Christian States, and that evil spectre of the Balance of Power in Europe began to take shape—fear and suspicion were the spurs that rowelled to ever bigger armaments, secret treaties, and the outbursts that left nations burdened with heavy debts and heavier hearts.

Two thoughts emerge from this reflection: Fear and suspicion must be allayed: and the destinies of men must be removed from the hands of a few, however highly placed, who, from motives personal to their interests or ambitions, or born of jealousy or hate, can plunge millions who share neither their interests nor hates into sanguinary strife.

It is not to be assumed that men have been idle in these ways.

Diplomacy is one of the most ancient of professions. Envoys and ambassadors, carefully chosen and specially trained, have been the watch-dogs and the peacemakers of the nations for centuries. By their care and skill they have averted many a catastrophe—for a time, and converted many a menace—for a season.

There have been Congresses and Conferences,

Sometimes these have been held after wars, when the envoys have met for the division of the spoil, and where the seeds of further wars were sown. There are those who aver that at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, at which Bismarck, Disraeli, and Gortschakoff were the dominant personalities, things were done which embroiled the Near East in decades of disorder, and paved the way for the greatest calamity of all. Other Conferences, such as the Hague in 1899 and 1907, met for a different purpose. Nations groaning under the burden of armaments sought for relief from the strangle-hold, and adumbrated ways and means by which this could be found, but little came of them. Fear and suspicion sat high above their heads and the delegates were powerless to exorcise them.

Since those days we have had the League of Nations, Locarno, and the Pact of Paris. All of them are in their infancy, and each of them has yielded something of value, but in no case has anything like the fullness of its possible stature been reached. That is not to be wondered at. Great causes, in which the elements are so mixed, grow slowly. Temperaments and interests are so opposed, traditions and prejudices so entrenched, that it would be foolish to expect other than tardy growth. That there is growth is obvious. That something has been done to clear the air so that growth may be accelerated, is patent. But the acid test of the strength and value of this growth is disarmament.

An exchange of courtesies is not disarmament.

The signing of treaties and pacts is not disarmament. The setting up of an international court is not disarmament. The gathering together at Geneva of representatives of the Greater and Lesser Powers is not disarmament. There may be the beginning of a better understanding between peoples. There may be the willingness to recognize the good in others where once that recognition was withheld. There may be a thousand amenities that are pleasant, and an easier way of patching up minor quarrels when tempers get hot and pride is roused, but that is not disarmament. These things have been done before in one form and another, and yet there has been war, because through fear and suspicion the nations were always striving to increase their preparedness for war.

It is conceivable that they will have the same issue again unless there is disarmament, which means the end of the building of great engines of war for use afloat and ashore—the end of the employment of highly-trained brains of men in the search for deadly poisons and flames by which men, women, and children can be scorched and twisted into hideous death—the end of the maintenance of great armies whose only purpose is to wield the weapons of human slaughter. But how? The League of Nations? Locarno? The Pact of Paris? Yes. These, and as many more as can be contrived. But as such, and without something more, these will be powerless. In spite of them the world is more fully armed than ever before. In spite of them France insists on strengthening

her every power of offence and defence. In spite of them the United States has within it a party clamouring for a bigger navy. In spite of them our own country staggers under a weight which, with the greatest difficulty, it can hardly bear. The enemies in the midst are still suspicion and fear. No guarantees appease them. No treaties satisfy them. No pleasant and polite conversations touch them. They grip the hilt of the sword as tightly as ever. Envoys and representatives smile at each other across Council Chambers, and see to it that the arsenal is furnished and the dockyard busy. They fear that what they have they must be able to hold. They suspect that the moment they cease to be in a position to hold, what is theirs will be snatched from them.

Is it unthinkable that this can be changed? Are these traditions and prejudices, these fears and suspicions, so deeply rooted in the nature of man that they cannot be eradicated? Must humanity go on exploiting its energies to protect what it holds and to acquire what it covets, and never be able to release them for the greater conquests of nature, and the fuller enjoyment of its own life? To admit that would be to abandon all hope, and to doom mankind to the pit. There must be a new internationalism or there will be a repetition of the old catastrophies. Envy, jealousy, suspicion, and fear, and all their hellish brood of craftiness and deceit, must yield before a new atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust, reconciliation, and aid. The safety of nations must not

be left to the balancings of power, however cunningly or convincingly arranged, but based on the unshakeable foundations of co-operation and goodwill. This does not mean the end of nationalism, or patriotism, or a sound and healthy love of race and country. A man need not be less an Englishman, less proud of his native heath, his language and his history, because he is a citizen of a world-order. If he possess that which, when added to the common stock by which nations thrive, will enrich them still more, he will be all the more a patriot and a lover of his own.

Indeed it may be claimed that the issue really depends upon the quality of leadership which the great nations of the world are able to give. The race with the greatest past, and which has shown a resiliency equal to the demands of the changing times, is better fitted to strive with fear and suspicion than races still held by terrors, and afraid of what is called for by the measures of man's mind. In order to calm the fears of France, England need not become French. We should not think it necessary to imitate America before we can hope to allay her nascent suspicions of our policies. We have our own genius, and the surest way of confirming our faith in the possibilities of the genius of other races is to culture our own according to the light we possess. The light we reflect will be determined by the strength of our reflectors. Fear and suspicion within our own ranks will dim the gleam, and delay the change we dream of. The fog that causes us to walk in peril must

be dissipated before we can send out the heartening rays to other peoples. And, here again, although the venue is changed, the battle is the same. Any dream of the end of international war involves the dream of an end of war within ourselves. It calls for a State which, believing in its genius, and in process of development to its highest capacity, has made an end of fear and suspicion, and is marching steadily toward the goal of world peace.

A Government based on the People's Will.

When we turn our thought to this phase of our subject we have much to encourage us. We do not claim that all is well with our system of government, or with the state of our industry. We have not made an end of class prejudices and privileges, nor have we banished the ignorance which blights men's souls. But we have reason to hope that in these matters there is neither stagnation nor the putrefaction which comes of stagnation. There is movement everywhere. Strong tides are flowing which are life-giving in their volume. There are ebbs and pauses as are common to tides, but it is a rising tide. There may be an advantage in slowness even, if slowness means that when a thing is done it is well done. No nation is more prolific of new laws than the United States, but many of them do not run. We boast that we are law-abiding, and the boast is justified. It is because of this that we dare to dream of a State, purged of its fear and suspicion, moving ever toward a

greater internal harmony, and offering to the world a leadership that calls for no arms to maintain it, and that challenges to emulation rather than strife.

It is impossible to think of a world reformed without thinking of a model, and it is natural that we should think of our own nation as providing one. We can do that without expecting that the model should be slavishly imitated in its details. A thousand things of heredity and tradition have to be taken into account, and a thousand modifications of any model are to be expected. Turkey and Afghanistan, like Japan and China, will order the line of their march according to their own light, and the power of their own faith. But there are certain fundamental principles which are operating in all nations, and it is by and through their full operation that the real kinship of the world will be assured. Some of them may be suppressed in some countries, clogged and perverted in others, but that does not mean that they will be destroyed. The tide may ebb, but it will flow again. No power on earth can prevent it. What those principles are have emerged into practice in our own country, and can be seen at work. It will help us in our dreaming to look at them now.

The first is a recognition that in government there must be a "government of the people, for the people, and by the people," and for the highest ends. Since Lincoln first used those words government has seen many mutations in many lands. Many ancient monarchies have been overthrown, and many free peoples have been brought under

the sway of a dictator. It may seem to some that this is an unfortunate time for them to be quoted at all when such nations as Italy and Greece, Spain and Poland, are living in thrall. It is argued that it is a benevolent thraldom and a necessary thraldom. It is urged that only by such drastic curtailing of liberty could the peoples be saved from the consequences of their own folly. Their servility, it is said, is the price of their prosperity, and they must bow the neck to the yoke that their drivers may plough more deeply the furrow of the nation's destiny.

Great publicists in this country have hailed these master-men as deliverers, and sighed for their like to be raised up among us—but they show no willingness to place themselves under their rule. We do not here examine the necessity for this seizing of power, nor do we judge the motives or the methods of the men who have leaped into the saddle and captured the reins. All that we are concerned with is the belief that such autocracies, whether they be in the hands of a one-time socialist as in Italy, a general as in Spain, or a king as in Jugo-Slavia, cannot afford a stable and permanent form of government.

The same is true of Russia. Those who believed so passionately in the dictatorship of the proletariat doubtless found it necessary to dictate to the proletariat, and equally necessary to dragoon the childlike-minded millions of Russia in their thought and action—slaying those who had any share, real or imagined, in their former hardship, and crushing

with an almost unparalleled ferocity all those who dared to differ from the order they set up. But that cannot last. If a nation is trained to read and write it cannot fail but begin to think, and when it begins to think it entertains its own ideas of liberty. A schoolmaster cannot be liberated and the pupil he teaches be held permanently in the coils of a lasso. It can be done for a time, but the growing life, like a growing tree, will demand more room. There was a Mazzini before there was a Mussolini, and the race that gave birth to both will not lie down for ever because the might of the one is supported by the strength of a black-shirted army, while the spirit of the other has neither citadels nor guns. And this will be the case everywhere, whatever prosperity a benevolent despotism may bring, so long as inspiration be not dead in the land. Man does not live by bread alone, and growing man has always been willing to fling away his mess of pottage for a bitter herb, if with the latter he could call his soul his own. Strong men can, and do, now and again, lay the hand of their brute strength upon the heart and cow it to their will, but man has discovered that he is free, and all such coercion is an evasion of the responsibility which that knowledge brings.

It is a far cry, however, from the emergence of this conception into the consciousness of a race, to a perfected form of government of the people, for the people, by the people, and for the highest ends. A democracy, however full and complete, with a universal franchise, with the initiative,

referendum, and recall, as these are employed in some of the American States, can be little better than a multiplied autocracy. It can concern itself only with material aims, and find its sufficient ends in the gratification of the grosser appetites. But that it sometimes does this is no argument that it is therefore reprehensible, and should be terminated. That would be as foolish as to say that youth, because in its hobbledehoy stage it is guilty of incredible silliness, should therefore be kept in a state of perpetual childhood, and grandmothered from its swaddling clothes to its shroud. Men, who in a consuming hurry to reach what they think is the perfection of things, and who are for ever seeking short cuts, would give short shrift to the democratic experiment. To them it is simply wasting time to train the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker—the Toms, and the Dicks, and the Harrys, of the streets—to think for themselves so spaciously, that by their thinking they can assist in the government of others. But there is no alternative. It is in the logic of things, and power must bring itself to the task of training. It is a part of the battle against ignorance, and an important part of it. The growing force possesses an explosive power, and it must be fitted with controls, or its power may be used for the wrecking instead of the building of great things.

The precise form in which this essay in democratic government expresses itself matters little, for nothing that is shaped can be considered final. The world advances, and in time outgrows the

forms which in our fathers' days were thought best, and parties and modes of government are as mutable as laws. The free spirit of man will build for himself mansions as his time and his ideal suggest. What he will care for increasingly will be that he shall be adequately represented, adequately safeguarded, and adequately considered. With these things guaranteed and observed he will bear his burden with the rest, and lift his standard a little higher. Given equality of opportunity he will not shirk the burden of his choice, nor cavil at the penalty of his defections. That is our goal, and while it is still distant it is glimpsed through the mists. It is so near in England that none but a few who still cherish feudalism as an ideal state would ask for a dictator. It is so real in its promise that none but a few, itching to destroy, would set the heather ablaze in an attempt to roast the partridge for their own supper. We have as one of our dreams of a stable and peaceful State a country governed by the people, and for the highest good of the people. Such a State would be a model State for the world to imitate. Its fullest realization depends upon the banishing of a special kind of ignorance by the shedding of a great light.

A Contented People.

But confidence in government is but a part of the whole. It is an immensely important part it is true, yet it is but a part. It presupposes general contentment with conditions, and that is declared

to be beyond achievement. This is admitted. But there is a difference between a general contentment with things which are equitable in principle and in process of being improved in detail, and the blazing dissatisfaction which is felt when things are glaringly iniquitous. And here again we are not without hope.

It would be quite easy for the critical observer to laugh to scorn our pretensions to education and religion. He could say that the former was a hopeless muddle, and the latter a scandalous jangle of warring sects. He would be partly right but he would be mostly wrong. Conditions must be judged relative to their past, and the measurement of a moment takes into account what is prophesied as well as what exists. None would claim that education in England is a model for any other nation to imitate, but all who know the story of the past fifty years would admit that vast strides of improvement have been made, and that the end is not yet. And, similarly, in religion. We have hammered out our opinions and we have gauged their worth. It has cost us much to do it, but it is done, and it had to be done. Man can only be satisfied by experiment and proof, but when the thesis is proved he is generally wise enough to accept the verdict. But he must have time. He will have time. And the observer of the religious life of the England of to-day can see, if he possesses a discerning eye, the thoughtful contemplation of the verdict, and the assembling of the hosts for change.

So is it with industry. No man can say that the condition of industry in England is ideal, considered quite apart from whether trade is good or not. The mere fact of prosperity, or otherwise, settles nothing. It cannot so long as the thought of man is busy with the big questions of production, distribution, and exchange. Thought about these things is not insular, nor is it modern in its eruption, and there is an ethical demand underlying it which must be worked out before there can be any approach to contentment with conditions. How it will be worked out no man can say, and it is difficult to forecast what the next step will be. But the thought is with us, and has been with us for generations. Great brains have wrought with it and tossed to the multitudes the result of their agonizings; and these panaceas have been seized upon as gospels, and their authors exalted among the prophets of men. Marx, and Lenin, and Tolstoi, have conjured up for millions the dream of a golden age which should mean the end of want, of economic instability, and of undue strain for any man. There have been schemes for the nationalization of every thing that is socially needed; for the end of the last vestige of capitalism and competition; for the standardizing of all life, and the insistence of the absolute equality of all men. Some of these schemes have worn thin in the struggle of debate, and are seen to be not what they seemed; and others have been abandoned as being without value in such a world as this.

But not all. Nor is it to be thought that because

one prescription has been found inadequate, and another operation dangerous, that the disorder is to be allowed to take its normal course until the patient is dead. Mind has clashed fiercely on mind in the process of illumination and elimination, and interest has fought interest with as bitter a tenacity as ever marked the battle of the jungle, and it has not been in vain. There are signs abundant to prove that. Men still talk of nationalization, and socialism, and communism, and men will continue to talk of them when their meaning is as different from what it is to-day as the things themselves are different from what they were thought to be a hundred years ago. No age can give fixity to such mighty concepts. All that any generation can do is to take the next and obvious step for which it has been made ready, leaving the generations to come to make their own interpretation, and to work out its content with the same halting insecurity we ourselves have known.

But we can see the trend. There is a sign of it in the councils that are being held between the employers and the workmen under what has come to be known as the Mond Commission. There is another sign of it in the amalgamation of great business. There is a promise in these things of a co-partnership which is arresting, if not fully satisfying. None would claim it to be ideal, but it is thought to be practicable, and it is the next step. When that is taken others will be seen to be practicable, and in time they will be taken. It will be found to be better to agree to go hand

in hand, if slowly, to better positions for both, than to take up weapons and fight, with nothing at the end but heavy-hearted defeat for both. And who shall say that all that is implicit in the best forms of nationalization, and socialism, and communism, is not implicit in this. Thought is drowned in such depths. Man can only make haste slowly, even in his interpretations. Once again it is the same cry that is necessary. "Let knowledge grow . . ."

Much has been gained in the life of a progressive State when its government has been based firmly upon a people's will, and its industry shaped under the direction of an ethical compulsion, but something more remains to be done. Something, indeed, without which neither of the foregoing advantages can properly function, and something more difficult of achievement than either. This is that there must be a sense of companionship among men which has transcended all barriers of class and privilege.

But that word companionship must be interpreted in its widest sense. It does not carry with it the assertion that all men are equal. Men are not equal, and no amount of assertion can make them so, and is the veriest pretence. And nothing is gained by the assertion. The necessity for companionship does not depend upon equality, and no companionship that is worth the name is ever based upon that. The narrower companionships of intimacy are based upon affection and love, upon similarity of tastes and pursuits, and agree

ments about recreations and pastimes. That will always be so. Companionship of that nature is no more to be forced than nature herself, and any attempt to force it would end in its destruction. There are a hundred reasons why men should be eclectic, and segregate themselves into companies and groups, and find their pleasure in so doing. Nothing is to be said about that. Such selections are the inalienable right of every man.

That, however, is a very different thing from maintaining class distinctions, and attempting to perpetuate the style of the old feudal relationships. The very measure of a man's pride in himself, and his state of birth and culture, should be the measure of his appreciation of what his neighbour might have been if he had enjoyed similar privileges. To companion a man does not call for familiarity so much as for the recognition of the sacred rights of his personality. It is a companionship of spirit rather than a companionship of intimacy, and it is the only real basis upon which a common companionship can be built. Familiarity may give a hundred reasons for offence, while the recognition of the right of personality gives us a hundred reasons why we should pity and not blame, help and not hurt. It would be a mockery, and an opportunity for much blasphemy, to command the aristocrat and the coal-heaver to hob-nob together, and the coal-heaver would probably be the first to resent it. But both aristocrat and coal-heaver would be the better if they saw something in each other they were called upon to respect. That

something is often not seen when men are judged by externals alone. Manners may make the man in a social sense, but in this matter the man's the thing.

We are not so blind concerning these things as we once were. There was a time, and not very distant, when it was adjudged a divine order that some should sit on high, and others should be their hewers of wood and drawers of water. These latter were taught that theirs was a state in which they should learn to be content, and to be grateful for the crumbs which fell from the tables of their lords. Any pretensions on their part to a greater place in the game of living was frowned upon, actively resisted, and not infrequently punished. If they had souls, they were thought to be of an inferior order: and should they by some inscrutable mystery of providence find their way to heaven, their heaven would be a superior kind of servants' hall. That blindness on the part of privileged England has cost England dear, but it is passing. We may not like the individual better. We may detest his dialect and his manners, but we recognize that he has a personality, and that he has a right to a place in the sun. It may be grudgingly admitted on the part of many, a forced attitude on the part of others, but the pass has been won. We are a long way from clear-sightedness yet, and many of us see as through a glass very darkly, but the scales are falling. And with every strengthening of the vision the sense of companionship will be strengthened. It is, again, more light that we need.

What will come of that? Compassion. It will be impossible to avoid being compassionate. When we see men struggling to be free—struggling to break the galling fetters, struggling to raise themselves to a higher level, blinded by the sweat of their toil, bleeding from the wounds gained in the struggle—we must companion them or be ourselves outcast. We do not hesitate when we see the maimed and tortured flesh of men. Let the story be told of a mining disaster, or a railway smash, or a lifeboat lost, or a great and heart-breaking poverty, and we feel at once the swelling heart, and the fingers itch to help. So when we see, with the vision of a true companionship, the need of the man behind the dialect and the outer expression of his limited and scarred life, we shall hail him as a fellow pilgrim and give him an arm to lean upon.

Is this an impossible dream? It is if we expect the wrong things. It is if we think that man will cease to consort with his kind, and forget all that culture, and taste, and affinity of nature mean to men. But not if we think of a time when those who have received and enjoyed much shall begin to think of how they can bring others into fields of greater plenty, and open before them the doors of a more abundant fancy. It will not be the work of a day or a generation, but it will surely come to pass. There will be many who will kick against the pricks, and strive with might and main to prevent it, but it will surely come to pass. It is the question of the banishing of a particular kind of ignorance and of the sending out of a great light.

So we venture to dream this dream. It is a dream for ourselves as a people first of all, for if we can reach its heights others can, and we may lead them. It is a dream of a companionship in which the strong shall help the weak, the fortunate the unfortunate, the richly endowed those to whom nature has seemed niggardly with her gifts. It is a dream of a partnership in activity, out of which men shall receive their equitable reward, and none shall have cause to complain that his work is not acknowledged. It is a dream of a government, representative of such a people and such a spirit, seeking peace and pursuing it to the uttermost ends of the earth. And it is a dream that what we see and believe in for ourselves may be known and enjoyed by the very least of the lesser breeds without the law.

And is it only a dream? Is there no basis in reason for it to be other than the baseless fabric of a dream? Our answer to that will depend on the estimate we make of the power of the light that is come into the world. Without that the prospect would be a dreary one, and most men would say with Huxley: "I know of no study which is so saddening as that of the evolution of humanity as it is set forth in the annals of history." "Even the best of modern civilization appears to me to exhibit a condition which neither embodies any worthy ideal nor even possesses the merit of stability. The theory of evolution encourages no millennial anticipations." Herbert Spencer, less gloomy of outlook, did think that the ultimate

development of the ideal man was logically certain. Even Darwin could regard natural selection as working solely by and for the good of our being, and could believe that "all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection." But we look for something more than that, and the faith that is in us is finely expressed by Viscount Bryce when, in the last of his series of lectures delivered in the United States, he said: "If the sentiment of a common humanity which moves your hearts when you hear of sufferings in other countries, the sentiment which made you send splendidly generous gifts for the relief at one time of Sicilian sufferers from the earthquake at Messina and at another of Chinese peasants dying of famine, which led your Government to remit the Boxer indemnities and made you as private citizens send tens of millions of dollars to feed the children of the Armenian mothers slaughtered by the Turks in 1915—if that sentiment, coupled with the sense that all nations are the children of one Father in Heaven, were to lay hold of the peoples of the world and make them regard the peoples of other countries as fellow-citizens in the commonwealth of mankind, would not the attitude of States be changed, and changed fundamentally for the better?"

That is it! Children of our Father in Heaven.

CHAPTER II.

Is the Raw Material Good Enough?

WE have set out in the previous chapter a dream of a world at peace. We have assumed the possibility of man reaching such a height of development that, under the compulsion of a spiritual and ethical urge, he will seek to do to others as he would be done by. We have postulated that the urge within him, whatever it is, however limited or extensive, must be supplemented by something introduced—something extra to what is native within him, and which is made known by a special and particular revelation. Are we justified in thinking that it is in man to respond? Or, granting that certain favoured races of men can respond, are we justified in thinking that all men can respond? There are vast superficial differences between the Negro, the Mongolian, and the Caucasian: do these differences run down so deep as to inhibit any part of the great family of man from sharing in the hope of a full and universal salvation, both as individuals and societies? If this is not so, how has it come to pass that inequalities so

stupendous have been built up, and such terrorisms crept in as war?

We are told that if we are to find the origins of class and caste we must go farther back than to the beginnings of the history of man. He inherited from his animal ancestry, so it is said, a similar proneness to "specialization of function" to that which is found in their world. There are leaders and followers, overlords and serfs, even there—and wherever these are found new origins of authority develop in the one, and the degeneration of capacity is seen in the other. The strains persisted when man emerged. The same accentuation of authority was seen in some, and the same marked absence of it in others. It is insisted that from the very beginning of man's life on the earth, and as a result of purely biological processes, some men were starred to be the kings of their order, while it was to be the lot of others to serve and obey.

At the same time it is significant to note that in the early dispersion and settlement of man, these differences were determined—or perhaps it would be better to say, precipitated—by occupation and environment rather than by innate superiority and inferiority. Inferiority would exist, but it carried no other penalty than that of its own inefficiency. Superiority would be proved, but its chief reward was in its own prowess.

This is seen, notably, among the tribes who lived by hunting. With them the maintenance of life depended upon the ability of each man to look

after himself, and a slave would have been a burden and a care. Besides, there was no need of slaves as the women of the tribe were already that. In any case in such a life as the hunter's, where freedom of movement and action was essential, the keeping of a man captive would have been next to impossible. In all such communities there would be more or less of an equality, and society would largely be bisected between male and female. There would be differences in skill and dexterity in the great game of securing food, and some men would stand out for special merit on track and trail, but slavery as such was practically unknown. This has been strikingly exemplified among the Red Indian tribes of North America, and especially among those least agriculturally inclined. In many cases, with them, the position of chief was provisional, and there were no classes and no caste.

The Beginnings of Slavery.

A modification of this freedom and general equality is found among the earliest tribes engaged in pastoral pursuits. With them the exploitation of flesh and blood was profitable, as the tending and milking of flocks and herds called for bondmen and bondwomen, whose servility was often of the most degrading kind. The ranges were extensive, but they had their limitations, which meant that escape was difficult. And as it is in all power to seek to increase its authority, so did those ancient masters of flocks strengthen their state. In later times, when many of the "chiefs" became preda-

tory, or had themselves to resist being preyed upon, their hold upon their slaves became more complete. To the immediate necessities of a livelihood was added the necessity of self-preservation. Many of the features of the earlier pastoral conditions are reflected in the feudalism of the middle ages.

There were great differences in the quality of the servitude. Abraham stood in this as far from some of the Asiatic barbarians as a modern model employer of labour stands removed from the old sweaters of the London Ghetto. But it was slavery. There were few signs of rebellion against it in the earliest days, and such as there were were promptly repressed. The rebel had little chance. It is sufficient to note that he existed.

The subordination of the inferior to the superior flourished most among those who settled down to the tillage of the soil. The gains of agriculture, which offered a fixed and settled habitation as distinct from the nomadic habits of the hunter and the shepherd, may have been discovered by chance, or they may have been due to man's instinct for the use and manufacture of tools. Tillage certainly solved some of the problems of a rapidly increasing population, but it created further problems of its own.

One of them was the necessity of occupying land as free as possible from the raidings of the hunter and the pastoralist, and the great valleys of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates came under the toil of man's hands. We think of Egypt and

Mesopotamia as the oldest of the civilizations, and the reason is probably to be found in the fact that because of their comparative immunity from raidings, life could settle down there with the least prospect of disturbance. This, however, was not without its psychological reactions. Safety meant the loss of that initiative which is born of constant watchfulness. It lessened pugnacity because there was not the same necessity to attack or defend. It led to a decreased virility of which full advantage was taken.

Agriculture, then, gave the first opportunity for a stabilized life which could develop into a civilization, but it was a civilization in which slavery throve amain. As populations became dense, and custom decreeing that men should live and work as their fathers had lived and worked before them more fixed—custom which affected high and low alike—there was a broadening and deepening of servile conditions on the one hand, and an enthronement of the absolute despot on the other. There was safety from the raider, but the price of it was a servility from which there was no escape. There was a development of the arts and crafts impossible to the hunter and the nomad, but the taskmasters were cruel, and the burdens heavy to be borne. It was not that there was an essential and fundamental inequality in the breed of men which made one an aristocrat and the other a slave, but rather that one had an initial advantage which he used, and which later generations through the centuries emphasized in the succession. It was probably

inevitable—the only way in which a natural leadership could express itself with the knowledge it possessed.

It is doubtless true to say that on these great waterways a type of civilization developed not to be matched elsewhere at the time. Situation, occupation, and environment all had a part to play in that. It is just as true to say that wherever man has been found he has shown himself to be possessed of qualities which hold within themselves an equal promise. There is no agreement as to which is the lowest form of man's life known on the planet, but those that are accounted among the lowest—Fuegians, Hottentots, the Pigmies of Central Africa—are all acquainted with the use of tools, and all possess the consciousness that there is a vast difference between themselves and the animals they slay and eat. The arrest of their growth, or their decline from what they once were as in the case of some of the African tribes, is probably due to their isolation, climate, and surroundings. Many of them were driven there by dire necessity in an attempt to escape what they considered to be a worse fate. Thrown out of the main stream into backwaters they have missed the friction caused by the clash of ideas, and customs, and cultures, and lost by a too intensive inbreeding much of what they once possessed. How far the lowest of them can be redeemed it is impossible to say, unless we are prepared to forget to think in terms of time. That they are capable of an almost unbelievable improvement is beyond question true.

The Urge That Rebels.

This is all the more clearly seen to be true when we seek to interpret what is involved in that consciousness of difference which is found even in the lowest types of man. At its simplest, and in its least developed form, it carries with it a recognition of self-hood. Man knows himself to be the subject of a wide and varied range of experience—"sensations, perceptions, memories, desires, resolves, imagination"—and the like. He does not speculate about this—seeking to discover what is his exact relation to these states of consciousness—until he has achieved a certain degree of culture. It is sufficient for him to know that he exists, a subject of experience of which he is aware, with a world about him he can perceive and exploit, and with a stored-up knowledge and experience within himself that makes him an entity, apart, individual, and unique.

But culture comes even in the crudest of civilizations. Man has to relate himself to other men. He lives with a clan, or a tribe, or a race, and there is built up in all these aggregations of men a code, wrought out by experience, and crystallized into customs which take on the sanctity of laws. There is thus built up a social inheritance to which each generation adds, more or less, and which becomes the common birthright of all who follow. The prehistoric savage would know it in its infancy, but it would exist even for him. There can be no assembling of men together, however primitive their type, without the evolution of some order

of government, and without the guidance of some determining principle.

When we think of the way in which custom decreed the appalling servitude of great masses, and the despotic power of the few, it would seem as if the determining principle had been wholly selfish. A closer examination of the structure of the earliest forms of society shows that it was not entirely so. There was a seeking after the truth of relationship even then. It is true that the seekers found little to encourage them, for men have been prone to slay their prophets, and the faggot, rack, and cross do make up the groaning record of the past. But the search went on. The apprehension of the goal, the ideal, the "good" was dim enough, but it was there. Its enrichments depended on the prophets and their revelations, but the enrichment was a continuous process. It was slow, incredibly slow, so slow that centuries pass with little to see of growth, but the apprehension was not destroyed. For this feeling after something better is fundamental in the nature of man, and its existence is not to be denied because the paucity of prophets meant it was of laggard growth.

And that instinct, intuition, urge, call it what you will, carried with it a fundamental obligation. There could be no approach, even to the dimly perceived good, without some repression of self-interest. Ages before the phrase was coined there was a far-off glimpse of what is meant by the greatest good of the greatest number. The efforts

to secure it, even in an infinitesimal degree, were often blundering and misguided, and not infrequently ended in something entirely different—but the intention was there. That it was often thwarted by those who had suppressed the impulse within themselves, or who had rejected the teachings of others, is undeniable ; but that has been a recurring experience to our own day. That it blundered in its attempt to express itself is but to acknowledge that its guidance was defective, or that there was no guidance at all. Culture came slowly, and a right culture was of the very essence of a correct understanding of conduct. An impulse toward the good in social relations, as well as in the highest realization of the self, even though it be a divinely implanted one, needs training, and the highest training of all.

But the impulse is in man, and it has always been there. It has functioned vaguely, and in many errant forms, but it has been there. It has been thwarted, and mangled, and crucified again and again ; but it has risen, renewed itself, and set out once more on its uplifting mission. Man has that within him which is instinct with the life of the divine, and which is ever seeking for its recognition and fulfilment.

That it has failed to develop in some races, or that in other races it has decayed after an initial development, or, yet again, that races which promised development have disappeared, is but to say that the ideal has been but dimly seen, or has been lost sight of, or abandoned. It has been

proved that man can be educated, and that the quality of his education is determined by the ideal which is set before him, and which he strives after. If the essence of a high social relationship lies in the culture of sympathy and compassion, and the subordination of selfish ends to the greatest good of the greatest number, then it follows that the ideal must be one which countenances and encourages that. At the same time it must set forth the power by which this can be achieved. There must be in it a belief in the perfectibility of human nature adequate to the high demands made upon it, and it must give birth to a faith that the process is a continuous one.

The almost entire absence of this belief is held to be largely accountable for the failure of the cultured people of antiquity to reach higher levels than they did. As Sir James Simpson points out, in *Science and Religion*, the idea of progress in the sense of continued, practical, intellectual and moral advance hardly ever entered the Greek mind. The Cyclic Theory of events, which was specially developed by Plato, held that life flowed upwards through a great space of time, and then downwards, ending very much where it began, and requiring a new creative act before the upward flow could begin again. The same belief in the catastrophic cycle of events is found in Roman culture which borrowed from the Greek. In neither is there any suggestion of a progressive change, sustained and continued into an indefinite future. There is no wonder that the great thinkers of that period were

marked by a profound pessimism, for with all their great gifts they lacked a knowledge of an inspiration which alone could bring hope and faith. In some of them the pessimism amounted to a condition approaching despair. All life was vanity, and there was no good in anything.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, as we shall see, these ancient outlooks on life began to be shot through with new gleams. A science of political history was being worked out. The widening knowledge of physical science, and the many discoveries to which this led, brought a brilliant ray. By this time, too, the leaven of Christianity was beginning to work, although its official expressions were not as clear as those which found individual release. Opinion centred into a belief that if there could be provided a right environment no race, however inferior, need be doomed to perpetual inferiority. The pessimism of antiquity was yielding to an optimism which in the 18th century held the field.

Everything was held to be dependent on environment—the influences working on the race as well as the efforts that were concentrated on the individual. If there was to be right conduct there must be right ideas, for conduct depends upon motive, and motive in its turn upon the force of ideas. It is not so much the structure of the mind, or the shape of the skull, that matters, as the atmosphere in which the individual grows up. If that be vicious it will work decay, even when the material is rich in content as it was among the

Athenians. If on the other hand there be vision in it, and a power adequate to the realization of the vision, then, even though the march be a slow one, and broken by many a halt, it will be upward.

The Rule by which Men Live.

This is seen when any survey is made of the rule by which men live, whether the community be a primitive one or one marked by the latest refinements of progress. It is seen at once that while there may be something approaching uniformity within a tribe or race, there are often great differences between the rule of that tribe or race and any other. In the earlier and simpler organizations this rule or custom was the only law or morality the people knew. However it came to be so ordered—under what impulse or by whatever experience—it represented the only conception known to them of the greatest good of the greatest number, or what was thought to be the best form of government that had been revealed. There was no escape from this judgment as there was no right of individual opinion. The custom of the tribe possessed all the weight of absolute authority.

As we think of them it is easy to see that from our standpoint many of the customs which had the force of law were wrong. And so long as the tribe or race continued to exist without any higher knowledge they would remain wrong. But for them they were right, and they were obeyed, unquestioned. There could be no questioning until

and unless experience had suggested a better way, or a new standard had been introduced as a result of new teaching. The former would work slowly, for custom is hard to break, and is as binding upon a Pharaoh as upon a slave, and as potent in its application to a rajah as to the poorest widow in India. There cannot be an improvement in the relations between men in a State, imposed by custom or law, until, either as a result of experience or revelation, something better is seen and desired.

But that something better was constantly being seen and desired. Even among tribes where custom appeared to be crystallized beyond any possibility of change, there was change. It was so slow a change as to be imperceptible at the time, and could only be recorded as a definite change when the comparison made covered a long period. It was usually a change involving some alteration of the social order, and therefore impinging in some way on the liberty of the individual. What friction of mind this caused, what challenge or protest, what agreement and suggestion for further change, can only be conjectured. But it was by such infinite gradations that the slow unfolding went on, and every step marked a new value in the experience of the organization concerned.

It is easy to see, too, that what was the "right" in one community was not necessarily the "right" in another. That can be accounted for. Climate and geography might have had something to do with that. Movement was slower or quicker in one case than in another. Experience was not

as varied and the friction of ideas not as stimulating. There was a less intimate contact with such outside world as existed, and therefore there could be neither the same opportunity for comparison or contrast. And so long as tribal or racial custom held its vice-like grip intercourse in many cases would be taboo. The policy of the closed door made for fixity, and was ever the enemy of progress.

And yet it is significant that during these long periods there is discoverable a consistency of support for that which recognizes the value of the social good when that was contrasted with a purely selfish interest. There would be exceptions, but they were mainly individual exceptions, and chiefly those whose personal interests were threatened. Clashes within societies, when the good of all was being insisted upon to the hurt of a few, were inevitable. That was in the nature of the case, as it is when two contending tribes or States, each with its standard of good, find themselves in collision. For uniformity of standard there must be a universal acceptance of an agreed truth. The approach to a right relationship within a State on the part of the individuals composing it, and between States, is begun, when that is seen and admitted.

This movement, however slow its progress, or however trifling its effects, must deepen the individual's consciousness of his own value. The results of the movement may be general in that all are touched by it, but that does not lessen the individual's sense of his own worth. He will not

fully understand its content. The simplest attempt to state it would probably cover him with confusion—but every change which regards him as an object of greater consideration enriches the thought. And with every such change in condition there is a widening of the mental horizon, and eyes instinctively search for a new landmark. Such a man will learn to distinguish between values, and will gain new conceptions of what is due to his own. Each new advance is but a spur to smite him to the pursuit of the next. Each new addition to his sense of dignity is but the stirring of a new discontent It cannot be otherwise, and it is as true of the savage as of the civilized man.

To the Uttermost.

So, although there are races which are manifestly inferior they are not to be regarded as hopeless. Low as they are in the order of being, they yet possess an equipment not unlike the only equipment possessed, at the dawn of their day, by races that are now mighty in the earth. They have a similar consciousness of themselves which, whether it be understood by them or not, contains within itself such potentialities as no man can measure. They have a system of government which may be cruel, unjust, lacking in a thousand things, but in which is to be found the seeds of what is held to be the greatest ideal known to man. Their position on the outer fringe, alike of civilization and the mood of progress, is far more often than not due to no lack

or fault of their own. They have been the dwellers in an outer darkness, or in the clouded twilight. They but await the dawn to set out on a march the end of which no man can see. They are not without an inner impulse. They have pride in themselves, their tribe, and their traditions. They conceive of honour, and glory, and they seek it. Their conceptions of what these things are may be crude, and wrong, as we think of them, but the point is that they can and do cherish ambitions. They need a new understanding of values. They need a new glimpse of personality and relationship. It is possible for them to receive it. It is the duty of those who can give it to do so with a generous heart.

They will need time—such lengths of time as will make the impatient man sick because of the slowness of their growth. But what of that! That has been the lot of all men who have grown in stature. They have needed such spaces of time as are incalculable and unthinkable. It is not time that matters so much as the ability to grow. Can they become increasingly conscious of themselves as personalities, and of what right relationship means between personalities? That is the question. Can they respond to a stimulation from without which can give them a right conception of both? If they can, then time is negligible, for such are to be considered the wards of those to whom time has been more kind.

And though there are men in races which boast of a greater enlightenment, whose yoke is heavy

and whose burden is grievous to be borne, that is not to say that their state is a fixed state. They may be low-browed and unintelligent. They may be coarsened by coarse labour, and exceeding vulgar because of a loathsome environment. They may be vicious because of an inheritance they could not command, or a training they could not control, or a perversity of taste they cannot understand. But if they possess the glimmering of a consciousness of self they need not be despaired of. If they can conceive of the simplest relation of mutual helpfulness they possess the potentiality of good citizenship. No man is considered dead who can react to stimulation, and no life should be abandoned which is capable of feeling the thrill of an inspiration. It is often urged that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but this is not a question of making a gentleman out of a clod-hopper. It is not even a question of trying to make all men equal. It is the question of lifting the standard of a man's life, and fitting him to fill in the most efficient way the place he can best occupy. And it is not a man, only, that we are thinking of, but the generations that are in him. What matters is not so much where he stands now, as where his descendants will stand a hundred years hence. And that is why, whether he be a Caucasian, Mongolian, or Negro, his life is important. A hundred years of life, lived at the speed of to-day, will see many changes in the relations of States.

And though there be such differing standards between States, because of which the dogs of war

can never be securely chained, that is not to say that the standards must for ever remain as they are. The fact that there is a standard at all is the only proof we need of that. That standard in itself, however defective, records a vast accumulation of changes, slowly wrought out, and is in itself an ever changing thing. At its best it never represents the best individual standard within the State, and is often far below it. And those higher individual standards are ever working to raise the standard of the State, often consciously, but always unconsciously, for a State standard is sensitive to the influences which are playing upon it, and registers them. This consciousness of State-hood, with its pride, and its ambitions, is the guarantee of its perfectibility. Its present sense of its relationship to other States may be confused and chaotic, because its standard lacks harmony with that of other States, but that can be adjusted. A modern State cannot live unto itself. The days of the water-tight compartmented State have gone for ever. An ever closer relationship is as great a political necessity as it is an economic necessity, and the consideration of that relationship is the most living thing in the mind of any living State. Sheer necessity is driving to the approximation of standards, and sheer necessity will drive the nations to a search for that which can bring it to pass.

Given a basic urge, a consciousness of self, and a sense of relationship, and all the elements are there which are needed for a belief in the possibility of the righting of social wrongs, and the ending

of war. A touch of civilization is giving to the peoples of mandated territories a new vision. A smattering of education in Western thought and activity is stirring the immemorial East into a wakefulness never previously known. The new orientation caused by the world-war is giving to States a sense of destiny they have never hitherto dreamed of. It need not be wondered at if in the first turmoil of revolutionary change—for each in its order is revolutionary—there is disorder, and misunderstanding, and the making of many mistakes. The danger lies in hurry and haste, and the greatest danger of all lies in the ignorance of the true composing standard. A great and massive patience is called for when a world is seething, and a patience such as that is of a quality so high that to expect it is to expect too much—unless it be born of contact with the greatest patience of all. But, because there are present in the life of men and States these elements of consciousness, we dare to hope and believe that the best is yet to be.

There is an urge in man which makes him desire the good and he has sought it. He must have desired and sought it or he would not have reached the point he has. At his best he has climbed out of nameless dreads, and fears, and superstitions; he has mastered in a thousand ways forces which at one time filled him with a sickening horror; he has built for himself a habitation at once spacious and beautiful; he has thought out for himself the meaning of many mysteries, and built up systems

of science, philosophy, and religion, which of themselves are a majestic tribute to the power of his desire. He has become poet, prophet, and priest, as well as workman, statesman, and scientist. He has listened to singers, dreamers, and the tellers of tales; listening to each for a message with its germ of growth. Through the long roll of the centuries he has been a scholar, sitting at the feet of many masters, gathering a fragment here and there, adding to his belief in himself, and learning a little more about what is meant by being his brother's keeper.

The pace has not always been the same. The light has not always been of the same quality or the same effulgence. The standards reached do not possess the same merit. It would be easy to maintain that such light as has shone has been rejected by the majority of men. It would be just as easy to maintain that States have not always lived out the precepts of their own avowed rule of living. Because of these variations there have been cruelty, and suffering, and injustice; and between States savage and murderous conflict. And in the main, each of the combatants has thought he was right. According to his standard he was sure that he was right. His standard may have been wrong, but it was the standard he accepted, and knew.

It is always, and ever will be, a question of standard. What is to be the rule, the inspiration, the sustaining power, that will determine the quality of personality, the ethics of relationship

between individuals, and the course of conduct between States? The question is, therefore, whether there is a standard adequate to the harmonizing of standards, however diverse; to the harmonizing of interests, however conflicting; to the development of personality, however low in scale because of lack of opportunity, or degraded by the wilful rejection of the light. Is there a reformer powerful enough in himself and in his resources, able and willing to compose these dissonances to melody—not a single, monotonous note on a one-stringed instrument, but a grand orchestration of music, in which every nation can play its own part, and make its own gift according to its own genius? We believe there is. He is called Jesus, and He came to be the Light of the World.

CHAPTER III.

At the Foot of the Range.

IT has been asserted again and again that there is an urge in man prompting him to reach out after something better than he knew. It has been admitted that in some races it has been so very faint as to be scarcely discernible; in others it appears to have been arrested; while in a few it would seem to have disappeared altogether. How much of this arrest, or apparent failure to function, is due to isolation, climate, or geography, cannot be determined. And only experiment and experience can prove whether it can be reawakened and quickened.

It is realized, however, that the necessity for its existence is an imperative one, if man is to develop a personality, capable of such association with other personalities as will guarantee a peaceful and peaceable world. Have we any warrant for thinking that this urge in man is an essential quality in his nature? Or is it due to an accidental development, itself the consequence of an external friction and therefore dependent upon it?

Our answer to this question will be determined

by what we believe about the Creator and His purposes in creation. If we think of the Creator as a Being, or Force, who, after having set in motion the vast machinery of a universe containing such a world as ours, was then content to leave it to its fate, we might accept the latter view. But if we believe that there was a purpose in creation, even though we can only dimly grasp what it is, we shall seek to find some evidence of its expression. That is the view we hold. We do not think of the Creator as the Eternal Dreamer, living in an endless and purposeless contemplation of his own felicity. We think of Him as the great Father, who, having given something of Himself to the creatures His hands have made, is for ever active in its development. We cannot think of the one without the other. Purpose would be meaningless, or mockery, without some such support. It is not necessary for us to know the exact nature of the "far off divine event" toward which the whole creation moves, to believe that. It is not necessary for us to understand all the processes which lead up to it. We try to understand and interpret them, but even after much anguished searching our eyes are held. That, doubtless, is in the purpose. The climb was meant to be a rugged one, and man was to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. But he was not left without a witness.

There is no more fascinating study known to man than the study of the ways in which man has sought to know his God. It is when we realize

how widespread this search has been—how it dates back to the earliest days of man's conscious life—how it has persisted in spite of innumerable "incidents" which must inevitably have destroyed anything less than something which was in the eternal purpose—that we marvel that any mind of man should doubt the existence of the urge, or the fact of a Creator who planted it. The search has taken many strange forms, but the motive behind them has been the same. In the words of Mr. Ward-Fowler, in his *Religious Experience of the Roman People*: "Religion is the effective desire to be in right relation to the power manifesting itself in the universe." In the earliest days the attempts to interpret that power were often childish, as might have been expected. The conception of a right relationship was just as childish, but there was always present the element of self-preservation and growth. It is not for us to smile at the lack of effectiveness in the desire, for that marks relationship to this day. The important thing to consider is that there was a recognition of a power, an attempt at some relationship, and, in some degree of effectiveness, the attempt succeeded.

If in this chapter we glance at some of the aspects of this childishness it will be with the purpose of showing how universal was the sway of this desire, and that in the desire itself there was implicit the embryo of a wonderful dream. If we can be convinced of that it will strengthen our faith that there is something in man to which an appeal can be made, and from which a response can be expected.

Such a conviction, too, will help us to recover from the inertia thrust upon us when we are faced with lean years, and are tempted to think that man has lost his soul. For if in his first searchings after God primitive man could find his way through the tangled thicket which tore his limbs, man is not likely to lose Him now. And there is no doubting the universality of that search.

The First Scouts.

Sometimes there was more of magic in it than religion, but even so, when it was most mixed and clouded, it represented an attempt to get into touch with the unseen world. And it is now admitted that in one or other of its magical or religious phases, or a combination of both, this search was universal among primitive men. Nor is the value of this movement of the spirit in man lessened, because in the attempts to identify the unseen power He was thought to be enshrined in strange places. We have to remember that it was a child outlook, only that it was infinitely more childish than any childishness we know. To that slowly opening mind everything mysterious would be the object of wonder or alarm, so that a stone or rock of a striking shape or colour would seem to be possessed of power. And what profound mysteries would confront and startle them! Sleep, and dreams, and death, and a hundred natural happenings, would clamour for explanation, and it was an easy step to associate them with powers that controlled them. Sometimes they pictured

their gods as animals or men, or half man and half beast. Sometimes they personified the great forces of nature such as the sun, fire, and the wind. In the worship of these gods there was ritual, the meaning of which was often forgotten. Myths were created to explain it, and these changed in character, grew less coarse as thought clarified, and died away. In the main it was grotesque and incredibly childish, but it was a search, and the search was not in vain.

As was to be expected the ritual of worship varied, but a common feature of it—although it is not regarded as a universal one—was the offering of sacrifices. In one of its forms, and what is thought to be the oldest one, the object of this sacrificial act was to express homage, or to make a pleasing offering, or to strengthen the tie which bound tribe and deity together. The intention was to cultivate a friendlier relation, so that the sense of good derived from the communion might be more clearly enjoyed. Another aspect of this sacrificial act carried with it a deeper meaning. The god was angry, or irritated, and must be placated. The offering in this case was intended to remove his displeasure, and to recover the lost friendly and peaceable relation. In this act of sacrifice there was an implication of a morality not found in the first. Some wrong had been done for which atonement must be made. And while in both these acts the tribe acted as a whole, in the latter it would often be associated with some individual, or individuals. We see in it at least

the beginning of the conception of sin and conscience. The ritual might be tribal whichever form it took, and there might be resentment on the part of the tribe at any personal intrusion, but that could not be wholly excluded. The individual would be bound to emerge, and changes would follow.

It is impossible for a community to subject itself to a rite which is a common search after a relationship with God, however primitive the conception, without the searching spirit being strengthened. It is in the order of all life that in this strengthening some should develop more quickly than others. When that occurs then the call comes to man to be a pioneer. He outgrows a form because he sees more in a symbol. He reads more into a rite because his intuitions have been enriched. There cannot be a quickening of the finite by the Infinite without this happening. And when it does happen, and the pioneer rises above the common opinion of his time, and cries like a voice in the wilderness, he pays the price of his boldness. But the price has been paid, and the rewards are seen. How often the pioneer who told of the new realm to be possessed has been stoned to death is beyond calculation. But he did not die in vain.

It must have been because of the emergence of such men that changes came. It must have been because of their clearer vision that the idea was clarified, and the attrition of myth and tribal god began. The demand for something more consistent with the new grasp of truth would be irresistible.

And equally irresistible would be the demand for a greater recognition of the rights of personality itself. It is because of that cycle—the bigger man making the bigger demand—that progress has come. It is upon the continuation of that process that the quality of civilization will be improved in the future, as in the past. We need therefore to be clear about what is meant by the bigger man, and equally clear about the influences that are necessary to produce him. It is not enough that there should be an urge within him. Man is the subject of many impulses. What we seek is the triumph of the best What, then, is the type we should set before us, as promising most surely the things we have in view?

He must be prepared to recognize in others what he claims for himself. As he believes himself to be unique, an individual, a person, a soul in the making, so he must regard them. They may not seem so. They may appear to be as alike as a flock of sheep—but to the good shepherd a flock of sheep is something more than a mass of exactly similar creatures. Men may be utterly unconscious of themselves as individuals of any worth, but that does not exclude them from this regard. They may be of a different colour, race, civilization; but instead of that rearing a barrier to their recognition it should the rather create a greater sense of responsibility for their development A man may be low in the scale of being—he may be depraved and vicious, cruel and selfish—but in some measure he looks out upon the world in a way uniquely

his own, and his thoughts concerning it, and his actions within it, are marked by the same quality. There can be no proper relation to life, as there can be no secure adjustment of relations between lives, unless this recognition is given its proper place.

The Type that Climbs and Leads.

A second characteristic of this type will be that man will seek the greatest possible enrichment from his environment, so that his own personality will receive the greatest culture. He will not neglect the arts, or the crafts, or the sciences, because it is by these means that he knows his world, and the affairs and movements of men's minds. But he will remember that he is a citizen of another realm which has its treasures to offer to the seeker, and that these treasures transcend all others in worth in the making of a soul. He will discover, too, that to live in ignorance of such an environment, or to ignore it or despise it, is for man to disinherit himself from the greatest estate of all. He will find that it is only as man discovers himself growing in stature as a result of this intelligent apprehension of the gift of the Spirit, that man can properly estimate other men, and his duty toward them. He will know that if he is to apprehend the purpose in life—a craving which ever marks the enquiring nature of man—that apprehension can only come from a growing and deepening knowledge of a Being whom he can love and adore. And out of this knowledge will be born that sense of duty which makes him a torch-bearer of his time.

Such men cannot be other than torch-bearers. They have discovered that selfhood does not mean selfishness. They have discovered that as their communion with the God whom they love and adore grows in quality, they realize in an ever deepening degree a sense of identity with His purposes. They cannot escape the thought that in some measure, consistent with their ability and opportunity, they must represent Him in an attempt to work them out. They do not feel that because of the prospect of any reward hereafter, but because they find it to be necessary to their own growth and peace. They have discovered that the greatest thing in life is an ever enlarging apprehension of what this spiritual environment can yield—that that is the only reality—and that nothing can compensate for its absence.

It comes to pass, then, that such men seek how they can serve the purposes of Him they worship. They are driven to consider the general good as having a greater claim than the private interest. If to secure that general good means the subordination of the material estate to the spiritual ideal, then the subordination must be made. Every such effort will mean the transcending of something which is known to be lower, by something which is felt to be higher; and every such transcendence will mark a growth in the greater self. And this is done of man's deliberate choice. He elects so to live that he may save his soul.

It is then that the attitude toward all life becomes

one of goodwill, and the estate that a man has to administer will be administered with goodwill. It may be of little or much material value: it may be rich or poor of temperament, or ability, or opportunity: but great or small, rich or poor, it is employed with goodwill. There is goodwill toward men of whatever race or standing. The problems that vex societies or races are approached with goodwill. This is recognized as a fundamental law of progress, and must be observed, because it is right. Its observance leads to happiness in the individual, and its general observance is the path to happiness for all. It is God realizing Himself in man, that the Kingdom of God might be built up in the hearts of all men.

It is a far cry from the earliest search after a knowledge of the unseen power to this high identification of a man with the purposes of such a God, but it is not an impossible one. If it were an impossible one there would be little hope of the dreams of men coming true. It will not be easy for men to reach such an altitude of goodwill, but the objects aimed at are so great that to expect them to be won easily would be folly. It is in man to reach that altitude. That is the last for which the first was planned. If it has not always been clearly seen by those who have sought to reveal the ideal to men, something of it has been glimpsed. It is when we think of what they saw, and how they sought to reach their heights, that we realize why Jesus stands out as the greatest of them all.

CHAPTER IV.

Beacons on the Foot-hills.

IT is beyond the scope of this lecture to trace to their sources all the influences which have led to this knowledge of God, and of man, and of man's relationship with men. Many of them were crude and incoherent, and were never systematized. They disappeared, or were absorbed by others with more of order and power in the stream. So Hinduism has swept within its flow many of the religions of the aboriginal tribes of India; Mohammedanism has blotted out, or mingled within itself, many of the faiths that held the ground in Central Africa, the East India Islands, and elsewhere; Buddhism has marched on in a mighty conquest through Tartary, Mongolia, Corea, and Japan. Such systems of faith as have disappeared in this way may have been of little value, but they represented the fruits of a search, and gave witness to a desire after a fuller way of life.

A fate, not dissimilar, has befallen some of the greater groupings of religion which became systematized, and which led to the founding of civilizations.

How great some of them were the researches of scholars are making increasingly clear. Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome played great parts in their day before they ceased to be. It is not to be supposed, however, that in their disappearance as civilizations as they once were, everything they knew, or thought, or hoped, has been lost. It is true that their religions were polytheistic and idolatrous, but many of their writings possess great force and beauty, and give evidence of a religious temper which can never be despised. Even though they failed to penetrate the veil, and walked stumblingly in the darkness, they had their heroes, their thinkers, and their martyrs; and much of what they thought and wrote has added to the wealth of the faiths which survive. We cannot forget that Abraham came from Babylon, and that Moses was greatly helped by Egypt. We cannot forget that whether Zoroaster was a real person or not, there was much in what he taught that reached out into the invisible world, and sought for the happiness of men and the prosperity of communities. There is found behind them all the recognition of a common need, and an earnest searching to find satisfaction. The Sacred Books of the East gather up in themselves the loftiest aspirations of many centuries, and will stand for ever as a monument to the strength of that urge in man which prompts him to live in harmony with the unseen power in the universe.

We discover how great a debt we owe to the vanished systems of the past when we think in

its highest sense of "The glory that was Greece," and "The might that was Rome." Homer may have known nothing of the Kingdom of Heaven as we think of it, but he loved men and life, and he quickened ideals which his own conclusions failed to satisfy. The philosophers may have raised more problems than they solved, but they widened the bounds of thought, and made the survey of greater horizons possible. Even the greatest period of all in Greek history, with Plato as its outstanding genius, failed to make Greek religion a success, because it was too vague and abstract; yet God had been personified, man had been made to stand out as an individual, and the foundations of morality laid. At the end the old gods were swept away, the old ideals crumbled into decay, society broke down from the operation of many disintegrating causes, but there was left discernible a hungering after the very things we have postulated as the essentials of all true reform: the understanding of a God whose purposes were noble, the recognition of a personality in the individual capable of an ascending growth, and a basis of relationship between men which would guarantee the good of all. How much of what was thought and discovered through these ages found its way into the thought and life of other systems can never accurately be known. That it profoundly influenced more than one is beyond doubt.

This is seen to be notable in the development of Hebrew and Roman religion. In the early forms of the latter there had been a great lack of any

moral teaching, and that probably because there had been no vision of lofty truth. Nor were these defects remedied by philosophy, for the genius of Rome lay rather in the making of laws than in the more intellectual pursuits of abstract speculation. Outside influences, and particularly those coming from the Greeks, enriched and harmonized much of Roman legalism, although it cannot be claimed that either Cicero or Horace made any striking contribution to real religious progress. In Virgil the strain ran deeper. He was conscious of the inner need, and glimpsed the way of its being met. If he taught no new thing he gave to some of those already known a new depth and significance, which at a later date had their own peculiar value.

Dim, and vague, and halting, as some of these processes were, they were yet processes, and the good they contained should be recognized. Even though the systems that were built up disappeared because they were unable to meet the needs of men, yet they had done something toward making the need known. The acid test of all systems is to be found in whether they can meet those needs in man, and in societies of men, which are fundamental. If they cannot, then however excellent they may be in part, they must fail. We do not lack in honour to the illustrious men of the past—great torch-bearers all—who flung their ray of light across the pilgrim's path, because we say that their light was dim. We do not minimize the work done by the systems which have persisted to this day when we point out their defects. We

are seeking for the torch-bearer whose light is so clear that it illumines the whole of the road. If they do not possess Him, then their need is that they should find Him. If we know Him, then it is our high privilege to make Him known to them. It is with this thought in mind that we look at the beacons which in India and China have been raised for the guidance of the world. It will be remembered that we dream of a world at peace which can only be found in an intimate knowledge of a God whose purposes include the full redemption of mankind; in a knowledge of self as His child, and partaking of His nature; and in a knowledge of a relationship which will make the good of all the highest commandment of action we know.

Hinduism.

In any estimate of the existing systems of religion which challenge Christianity to-day, pride of place must be given to those which are to be found in India. The higher castes are of the same Aryan race as ourselves, and they are not only possessed of keen intelligence, but are distinguished for their profound spiritual instincts. And these have been bewilderingly fruitful of result. Hinduism, which holds a population of nearly two hundred million souls, has produced prophets, priests, philosophers, psalmists, lawgivers, and revivalists, to an incredible degree. Sir Monier Williams says of it: "It is the natural religion of humanity or the collective outcome of man's devotional instincts, unguided by direct revelation. It admits of every form of

internal growth and development. It has no organized hierarchy under one supreme head, but it has an infinite number of separate associations of priests, who band themselves together for the extension of spiritual supremacy over ever-increasing masses of population. It has no one formal Confession of Faith, but it has an elastic pantheistic creed, capable of adaptation to all varieties of opinion and practice. It has no one Bible, no one collection of writings in one compact volume like our Holy Bible, with lines of teaching converging towards one great central truth; but it has a long series of sacred books, some of which profess to be direct revelations from the Supreme Being, and each of which may be used independently as an authority for the establishing of any kind of doctrine, deistic, theistic, polytheistic, or pantheistic." There is thus no one key which will open up to us the heart of Hinduism, just as there is no one great outstanding personality gathering into Himself its highest expression and interpreting it.

It is impossible, here, even to summarize the contents of the literature of Hinduism, and only the barest outline can be given. It is thought that the earliest part of it dates back to between the 10th and 15th centuries before Christ, but the assumption is incapable of proof. It consists of the four *Vedas*, largely poetical, which contain the germs of all later development, and represent the first phase of the religion. The *Brahmanas*, which are priestly commentaries, illustrate and direct the ritualistic uses of the *Vedas*; and the *Upanishads*,

which are philosophical writings expand earlier references to the problems of the universe. These appeared at great intervals of time, and were followed by the *Sacred Law Books*—concerned with the constitution of society, the co-ordination of castes, and the regulation of daily life—and these together represented the second phase. The great epics, giving prominence to the doctrine of incarnation, came later, to be followed yet again by the *Puranas*, and the *Tantras*—the latter giving prominence to the worship of the female energy of some god, especially the wife of Siva in one of her many forms. The *Puranas* and the *Tantras* represent together the modern phase of Hinduism.

In this great mass of literature may be found, in one form or another, most of the religious ideas that the mind of man has conceived. God and His nature; the soul of man and its immortality; prayer, and faith, and works; sinfulness, and self-surrender, and sacrifice; all have their place in this vast reservoir of religious and spiritual speculation. And yet, instead of leading to the unifying of the faith and to the worship of one God, it has ended in a perfect riot of idolatry; and instead of leading to the elevation of the millions who were embraced by its system, many of them present the spectacle of the utmost degradation. Sir Monier Williams goes to the length of declaring: "I verily believe that the religion of most of the Hindus is simply demonolatry. Men and women of all classes, except perhaps those educated by ourselves, are perpetually penetrated with the idea

that from the cradle to the grave they are being pursued and persecuted not only by destructive demons but by simple mischievous imps and spiteful goblins." Wherein lies the weakness of this colossal activity of mind and spirit, that it should so signally have failed to reach a higher level than this?

The roots of this weakness are found in the Hindu conception of God. That this conception is profound there can be no doubt, but that it is fatally defective is equally true. Hinduism is pantheistic, and its literature teaches that nothing exists absolutely except Brahma. The soul of man emanates from Brahma, and after many reincarnations will return to Brahma. God has no personality apart from man, and man has no independence apart from God, and absorption back into the Infinite is the supreme crown of man's being. But this is regarded as the final reward of virtue, and before that state of felicity can be reached many transmigrations are necessary. For those who need punishment the Hindu imagination has conceived of many hells to be visited in the intervals between reincarnation.

With such a view of God and man it is not difficult to understand why the caste system has secured its grip on Indian society. The system was born of the instinct of self-preservation. The Aryan invaders of India, conscious of their superiority over the subject races, and jealous for the preservation of their civilization and religion, built an impassable barrier. The Brahman did not believe that the capacity for beholding the unseen

was in every man, and all their laws and institutions were designed to preserve the purity of their own blood and faith. That the Brahmans for many centuries conceived of their privileges as imposing heavy responsibilities is incontestable; but that this conception degenerated into contempt for others, a supreme disregard of their rights, and a practical denial of human brotherhood is equally true.

What it means to India now cannot be better stated than in the words of B. B. Nagarkar, of Bombay, one of the leaders of the theistic movement known as the Brahmo-Somaj: "In western countries the lines of social division are parallel but horizontal, and, therefore, range in the social strata one above another. In India these lines are perpendicular, and, therefore, run from top to bottom of the body social, dividing and separating one social stratum from every other. The former arrangement is a source of strength and support, and the latter a source of alienation and of weakness. Perhaps at one time in the history of India, when the condition of things was entirely different, and when the number of these castes was not so large, or their nature so rigid as now, the institution of caste did serve a high purpose: but it is long, too long, since that social condition underwent a change. . . Caste in India has divided the mass of Hindu society into innumerable classes and cliques. It has created a spirit of extreme exclusiveness; it has crowded and killed legitimate ambition, healthy enterprise, and combined adventure. It has fostered envy

and jealousy between class and class, and set one community against another. . . Therefore the first item on the programme of social reform in India is the abolition of caste and the furtherance of free and brotherly intercourse between class and class, as also between individual and individual, irrespective of the accident of his birth and parentage, and mainly on the recognition of his moral worth and goodness of heart."

Great as Hinduism is in many of its aspects, and wonderful as have been its excursions into speculative thought about God and man, it offers no hope for the achievement of such a dream as this. Still less does it offer the hope of a world at peace because it is a world of fruitful endeavour, under the inspiration of a great and compelling ideal.

But what of Buddhism? In the beginning the secret of its power and influence lay in the personality and power of one man, who lived and died a Hindu. His disciples claimed that he was the greatest, the wisest, and the best of them all, and regarded him as gathering up into himself the best the ancient faith had ever held. For a time it seemed as if all India would think the same, for he originated a movement which all but swept everything before it. Its Sacred Books contain so strong a Christian colouring that it has been thought that Jesus, or the writers of the New Testament, must have borrowed from them. There was borrowing, but the Buddhists were the borrowers. None of this colouring is found in the ancient

Buddhist classics, and it is now held that the later writers enriched their volumes from New Testament sources. In other ways, too, modern Buddhism is very different from what it was as it was shaped by the founder. At first it was a challenging call to the worship of Humanitarianism, but with no life in it higher than man's life, and no future beyond this life. It did not remain like that. Sir Monier Williams says of it: "It passes from apparent atheism and materialism to theism, polytheism, and spiritualism. It is under one aspect mere pessimism; under another high morality; under another a variety of materialistic philosophy; under another simple demonology; under another a mere farrago of superstitions including necromancy, witchcraft, idolatry, and fetishism."

Siddharta Gautama.

The founder of this system—Siddharta, the son of the Rajah of Kapilavastu, a town between the Holy City of Benares and the Himalayas, whose family name was Gautama, of the tribe of the Sakyas—became enlightened and thus attained to Buddhahood in the 6th century before Christ. The story of this enlightening is as heart-searching as its quality is pathetic. Gautama was consumed with a passion to discover the meaning of life. The pessimism of India lay heavy on his spirit. The loathing of an existence born of a belief in the transmigration of souls clogged his thought, and that he might solve the inscrutable problem

he made the Great Renunciation. He forsook everything, became a beggar, sought famous scholars in their retreats, and, dissatisfied with all he heard, went with five disciples into the jungles, to test whether the soul could become independent of the body and find release and relief.

Through six years of a rigid asceticism he sought the way, and failed to find it. Then, abandoning his ascetic rule, forsaken by his disciples who regarded him as an apostate, and contemplating a return to his home and the duties of his state, the revelation came. The secret of life lay in the mastery of desire. This could be attained by inward culture and love to others. It involved the overcoming of desire for sensual pleasure, wealth, and the continued existence of the personal life. Sacrifices and penances were unnecessary, caste was a convention, and God was superfluous. As all existence involved suffering, the most to be desired thing was the end of all existence. To escape transmigration and all its probable horrors man must achieve Nirvana, which to Gautama meant the end of the restlessness of mind and heart, themselves the cause of renewed individual existence. The way to Nirvana lay along the middle path of right belief, right resolve, right language, right behaviour, living by alms, suppression of self, the regarding of the body as impure and transitory, and the reposing of the mind into trance-like quietude.

On these verities Gautama built up a system of morality of a very high order, and a social

organization well adapted to the life, habits, and thought of the East. To the four Commandments borrowed from Brahmanism—"Thou shalt not kill"; "Thou shalt not steal"; "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; "Thou shalt not speak untruth"—he added a fifth: "Thou shalt not take intoxicating drink." He laid down rules concerning eating; forbade dancing, singing, and music; the use of scents and ornaments; a luxurious ease in sleep, and the receiving of gold or silver. He enjoined the virtues of resignation, forgiveness, and all charitable duties called for by the suffering of the world. And he supported his creed by a personal life of which Barthelemy St. Hilaire has written: "Except Christ alone, there is not, among the founders of religion, a figure purer or more touching than that of Buddha. His constant heroism equals his conviction; he is a finished model of all the virtues that he preaches; his self-denial, his charity, his unalterable sweetness seem not to fail for a moment." And it was this charm and power of personality, rather than the verities or the moral code which he taught, that made Gautama's appeal the success it became.

It is not to be thought, however, that they had no appeal of their own. The common people regarded them as a practical religion, and as a protest against religious monopolies and priestly pretensions. The time was ripe for such a reform, and this breathed of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Although to attain to Nirvana meant that the devotee must become a mendicant monk, the

doctrine of universal brotherhood attracted multitudes of lay brethren. Indeed Buddhism so enthroned the individual that it declared man to be sufficient to the attainment of perfect righteousness by his own efforts. There was no need of any revelation as there was no need of any divine assistance. For forty-five years Buddha travelled from place to place, speaking to the people in their own language, and employing dialogue, parable, and fable, with such effect that the people heard him gladly.

Why has this great system failed to meet the needs we consider to be in man, and which must be met before the dreams of men are filled out into reality? Its founder was a man of lofty character, and its creed had a high ethical value. Its success as a great reforming force was only arrested for a short time after Gautama's death, and for centuries its power was for good in India, and Eastern and Northern Asia. It encouraged education and culture; it was sympathetic toward liberty, and promoted peace and goodwill among men; it taught the great virtues of purity, and love, and compassion, exhorting that they should find expression in a generous benevolence towards all creatures; and it denounced war, and avarice, and selfishness in every form. And yet it has made no appeal to races of other than a low order of civilization, nor has it permanently elevated those to whom it did appeal. Why is it that they remain unspiritual and unprogressive?

The answer, again, is because Buddhism is

defective in its lack of recognition of God. Buddha is intelligence, and the highest form of intelligence is the perfect man, and the only object of worship is the memory of the glorified Buddha, or one of his images, or the Buddhas that are to be. Gautama rejected the metaphysical God of the Brahmans because he could not conceive of the existence of an abstract personal spirit, but after his death Buddha himself came to be worshipped by countless millions as supreme. Later, other similar essences of knowledge were added to the objects to be worshipped. In its way this worship of a self-enlightened intelligence was an abandonment of a true atheism, although it failed to preserve morality as a regulative or inspiring power, and Buddhist worship has become the most elaborated and mechanical formalism of any religion in the world. It is thought in some Buddhist countries that mere repetition of a prayer, even though that is done by machinery, stores up merit. We know that such a travesty of prayer can accomplish nothing, either toward the better understanding of the unseen, or the development of the spiritual in man.

Buddhism is equally defective in its view of man. Sin was regarded as cosmic rather than personal, and for that there could be neither remission nor atonement. There is nothing higher than man, and man is a thing of fate, and his supreme effort should be to escape misery by becoming extinct. The surest way to achieve merit which leads to extinction is by adopting a

monkish habit, and becoming a mendicant. There is no hope for mankind in a faith which has no standard above that which its own reason can set, and which, because of its hopelessness in that direction, condemns man to misery until he finds escape by being blotted out.

Confucius.

The same century that gave Buddha to India gave Confucius to China. Even at that remote date China had a long history of different races and kingdoms, with different laws, languages, and institutions, and of races which had waged relentless war upon each other. It was Confucius who made China one country. Not because he was a poet or prophet, but because, being a student and historian, he compiled a series of classics which unified them all. He made no claim, as Buddha did, that he had discovered a spiritual interpretation of the universe; and yet millions worship him in temples dedicated to his name, and he is regarded as the Father of his people. As a teacher he attracted thousands, and the greatest of those who sat at his feet spoke of him as the greatest man who ever lived. "Like a phœnix among birds, a mountain among ant-hills, and rivers and seas compared with rain pools." What did this man do for China that won him such high place in the thought of his people?

At the time in which Confucius lived there was in China but the vaguest idea of a God, and little or no provision for the cultivation of the religious

side of man's life. In consequence gross and fantastic superstitions held the people in thrall: sacrifices were offered to the spirits of the hills, the rivers, and the forests; and the practice of divinations opened the way for charlatans to batten on the fears and miseries of the people. Confucius, making no pretence to knowledge of the supernatural, sought to find the secret of a peaceful and stable society in the wisdom, the settled order, and the institutions of the past. He made no attempt to combat superstition, believing it would disappear most quickly if left to itself. The great conclusions he reached were very simple.

The worship of Heaven should be left to the Emperor, who, in this act, would unify the people with himself. But all, the Emperor included, should worship their ancestors. Since that day filial piety has been the supreme piety, and a man may think and believe as he likes—be he Buddhist, Taoist, or Mohammedan—so long as he does not fail in this. Then Confucius stood for the essential goodness of man's nature: and that the foundation of stability is to be found in right social relations between sovereign and subject, husband and wife, parents and children, elder and younger brothers, friend and friend. It is said that when an eminent disciple asked Confucius whether he could not sum up in one word the rule of conduct for all life, his reply was: "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others." But even though Confucius thought that one word could spell all the obligations of good

social relations, he preserved from the past the *Book of Rites* which contained elaborate directions for the observance of every kind of ceremony in life. He was fully persuaded that man could be made good by law, and that given the chance he, himself, could reform the world.

Confucius was given his chance so far as his own State was concerned. He was made the Minister of Crime, and crime almost disappeared, and he was as thorough and successful in the reform of other affairs. Jealousy, however, drove him out of office, and for thirteen years he lived in exile, honoured, but unemployed. He might have found place and power if he would have compromised, but that he refused to do. He gave himself a little personal latitude as when on one occasion danger prompted him to give an oath which he had no intention of keeping he justified his breaking of it by the plea that the spirits did not hear oaths extracted by force. In his seventieth year he returned to his native province, and spent the last years of his life in completing the classics of his race. These are now everywhere recognized as the Sacred Books of China.

Steeped in the spirit of ancient China, Confucius came to believe in social order as the one thing needful. Society was the great reality, and its keyword was reciprocity. To preserve and enrich society, education, example, and rigid ceremonial, were of the first importance ; and the great object of all education must be moral. The building up of education in China has been on this basis, and

China may boast of possessing one of the fine systems of the world. And as the whole of the public service in China is by examination, public instruction and public business are recognized as working hand in hand.

What could be better than this? Confucianism had its roots in a great historic past. It was a system peculiarly suited to the Chinese character. It possessed an excellent moral code. It taught respect for the law, and example, and laid emphasis on correct ceremonial and custom. It unified China—and yet it failed to satisfy China. The reason why it failed was given by a Chinaman himself, a contemporary of Confucius, one Lao-Tse, the keeper of the archives at Chow. Lao-Tse was an old man when Confucius went to see him, and the venerable philosopher, probably the greatest thinker China ever produced, a little irritated it may be by the assurance Confucius displayed, ridiculed his dreams of reforming man by external laws and ancient examples. Human nature was not reformed like that, he said. It had a genius for evading law, and it would not for ever walk in the footsteps of the past. Lao-Tse was right. Instruction in the classics may make man wise, wealthy, virtuous, and honoured, but man is not satisfied with that. In effect China has admitted it. An education narrowed down to that leaves an awful void which man seeks to fill.

That is what has happened in China. The restriction of worship to the Emperor, the exclusion of any personal relation between God and man,

and the profound ignorance of the future, left the door open, and Taoism and Buddhism came in to fill the void. As a political and educational system Confucianism had succeeded, but it failed to understand God, and it did not understand the nature of man. There was no dynamic, for there was no challenging ideal for man; and there was no adequate inspiration, for there was no personal contact with the Divine. And neither Taoism nor Buddhism supplied the lack—for they too were defective in their teaching of dependence on, and of fellowship with, God, and in their conception of what life holds for those who follow the true gleam.

Mohammed.

Mohammedanism came into the field at a much later date. It was not until the 6th century after Christ that Mohammed was born in Mecca, and he was forty years old before the call came. Mecca was a holy city then, for there stood in it a temple to which the Arab tribes had come from time immemorial. High above all the temple gods stood Allah, the Supreme Being, but none worshipped Him, for no man could enter into relations with Allah. In Mohammed's time the gods who dwelt with men were given a perfunctory homage, but the hollowness and mockery which characterized it, together with his own sense of its emptiness, drove Mohammed to a search for a more satisfying faith. In his travels on business he had met Jews, and Christians, and had heard stories of

their great days and their great hopes. These were probably garbled and inaccurate, for Christianity had grown worldly and corrupt, the truth obscured by dogma, and Mohammed was no scholar to sift the grain from the chaff. He felt, however, that there was truth in what he heard, and this feeling was strengthened by contact with the Hanifs. These were believers who had rejected polytheism and worshipped Allah, making submission to His will the only test of faith. Mohammed soon came to believe that God—one God—was to be the dominant power in his life. He had heard of the great prophets and their revelations—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, whose revelation was the purest of all—and he was eager to be accounted of the succession, exclaiming: "Say ye to the Christians their God and my God is one." But he was refused and mocked.

The crisis of Mohammed's fate came after long prayer and fasting in a cave at Mount Hira where he was spending the sacred months. The call came to him there, to be confirmed later, and for twenty years, first in Mecca and then in Medina, revelations were given to him from God, through the angel Gabriel, which being written down became not only the Bible of the faithful, but their code of law and jurisprudence, and their Book of Common Prayer. For ten years he fought a fierce battle in Mecca against every kind of opposition, declaring to men a God, spiritual and powerful, who executed righteousness and who would surely punish sin, but eventually he had to flee. He joined his con-

verts in Medina, recognizing that the new religion and not blood-relationship was to be the foundation of all social and political relations. A simple creed was shaped that was to prove strong enough to shake the world: "There is no God but the Lord, and Mohammed is His Apostle."

The year of Mohammed's flight to Medina, A.D. 622, marks the beginning of Moslem history. During the following ten years Mohammed played many parts. He was ruler as well as prophet, and he exhibited frailties and inconsistencies which at one time he would have scorned. At the time of his death, and in spite of these departures from an earlier idealism, Arabia lay under the spell of the faith he had proclaimed. On his passing it appeared as if the structure would fall with him, but it rallied, and backed by the white-hot zeal of the Arab warriors it blazed a trail over the greater part of the civilized world. It was either Islam, the sword, or tribute. At its best it encouraged culture, and again and again Christianity came to death grips with it and barely escaped. Since the 16th century its power has declined in Europe, but it still holds Central Asia, and is striving mightily for a greater sway in India and Africa.

It is often urged that Mohammedanism won its mighty victories because of the sword, and the fact that it permitted a loose morality; but it took more than that to fuse the Arabian tribes into a nation and an irresistible army. Mohammed took hold of truths held alike by Jews, Christians, and Hanifite Arabs, and by the heat of his own

ardour made them flame for multitudes. To Mohammed the world was God's world. Allah was the Eternal who had ordered all things, and man's whole duty lay in submission. In danger, when exposure to death was called for, this conception of faith made the Mohammedan careless of consequences. What happened to him then was Kismet, and he had no responsibility. In times of peace the same view of fate led to torpor and inaction.

Thus, although the conception of God was a lofty one, containing within itself what had been borrowed from Judaism and Christianity, it held no hope of fellowship with the Divine. Any such thought was repugnant to Mohammed, who taught that the only means of knowing God's will was by revelation through the prophets. The *Koran* was the link, and the only link, between man and God. Attempts have been made to remedy this, but they have been alien to the spirit of Islam and their success has only been partial. But what was an even greater defect was Mohammed's imperfect conception of the holiness and righteousness of God. It was because of this that Mohammedan morality was so inadequate, and the cause of its inability to develop and sustain the highest type of civilization.

Much of progress has been claimed for Islam, but all that is claimed is not justified. There have been great movements of the mind in Mohammedan countries, but that they have been wholly due to Mohammedanism is not proved. Besides, the test

of a faith is not so much the influence it exerts on the sciences and arts, but the way in which it develops man—elevates his ideals, shapes his relationships, and registers itself in the structure of human society. Islam has placed a permanent ban on woman which of itself is a fatal defect; and it has reduced man to a position of servile ineptitude before God which is the perpetual enemy of human dignity and progress. When we are looking for the light that will reveal God to man, and man to himself, so that by this double revelation there can be built up among men a society which is equitable, and illumined by mercy and compassion, we shall have to look elsewhere.

CHAPTER V.

The Light on the Peak.

IT will be seen that if right social relations between men and States depend upon an adequate conception of God and man, and the relationship between them, none of the great religious systems at which we have glanced go deep enough, or far enough. They have their mountain peaks, as they had their up-lifting men; and all of them can furnish individuals whose thoughts and lives were better than their creeds; but at their best, as systems of thought, they were, and remain, but preparatory for something better.

The universalism of the Greek Stoic was a fine conception but it was more of Empire than of Spirit, just as the ethics of Plato and Aristotle were mundane rather than of inspiration. The essential freedom of all men, and the essential inter-dependence of all men, were conceptions too big to arise out of theories concerned with a State, however spacious they were. These limitations of outlook concerning man's spiritual destiny were not due so much to a lack of morality as to the immaturity of religion. A universal morality springs from a

religion which is as universal and as extensive as man himself, and no less a morality than that can suffice. Nor can a universal religion be built up from the foundation of a limited conception of morality. That is, indeed, to put the cart before the horse.

An examination of the religions which have gathered about the great names of Buddha, Confucius and Mohammed, show a greater lack. To one, existence was an evil to be escaped from at the earliest moment. To another, existence was something which could be drilled into order by morals and maxims, which yet left woman degraded, and permitted blood-revenge. To a third existence was a prisoner under an irrevocable sentence, which neither petition nor rebellion could alter. To leave the world to such immaturities would be to condemn it to hopelessness. Fortunately for mankind another Teacher stands out from amongst them, the greatest of all, whose name is Jesus.

He, too, like Buddha, and Confucius, and Mohammed, had a background in history, and one which from the earliest times held within it the promise of universal conquest. It was a very different conception of universalism from that of the Greeks, for to the Hebrew it was to find its crown in a religion for humanity, by which all nations should be blessed. That was the promise to Abraham. When the prophets thought of God as a Father they thought of Israel as a son. When Israel prayed it prayed as a nation—for the restoration of the Holy City, and the return of the ransomed.

It is the nation which is the servant, and the law of service is not personal happiness but social good. Even when later aspiration took on a more personal form, the central idea was the same. The Servant's mission was to heal and serve. The same representative character is seen in the great individual prayers and confessions. There is more in them than the cry of great individual souls pleading for forgiveness and deliverance.

The immaturity of this early conception is seen now, but it was fundamental then, and preparatory. It permitted of the elimination of what was thought to challenge stability and permanence: it conceived of the highest good as contained in peace and prosperity—a land flowing with milk and honey—but even that could only come from obedience to God. It was not a purely materialistic prosperity that was envisaged, and the ideal was never permanently fixed. It emerged as faith developed in depth and scope.

It was a slow growth. There were many halts and retreats. Sometimes the Springs were almost barren, and there were Winters which left the land naked. But the Springs were not entirely sterile, and the fierce blasts of Winter did not kill everything. From the background of a natural religion the belief in one God began to stand out, and challenge for its place. Many clinging garments from the past hung about it, but they were shed, one by one, during the Springs that came, as dead beech leaves fall when the new buds demand their place. Great names are associated with those

Springtimes—Moses who sowed the seeds of a faith; David, who gave his kingdom in Jerusalem a centre for the affairs of God and the State; Elijah, who taught that God was the defender of justice and must be so regarded; the Prophets—men as different as Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, and yet all insisting in one form or another on the unity, the holiness, and the righteousness of God, and condemning oppression, injustice, and selfishness. God demanded service—unselfish service—and not shallow and empty ritual. And He required it of all men, and would continue so to require it. Israel might perish, but God would abide, and His righteousness still operate. Here was the splendour of a rich spiritual Springtide.

And then Winter again which brought purification, and the emergence of a man, Jeremiah, whose heightened sensibility to the spiritual in religion emboldened him to stand before God, a person, demanding justification. Jeremiah not only deepened the stream, but he emphasized the individual experience of its flow. Exile brought its bitterness, but disaster gave to religion a new grip, and brooding over it one of its richest books of consolation, which tells of God as unchanging, almighty, and the eternal energy of redemption. At the same time it is a call to service—for which the suffering had been a preparation—such as no religion before had conceived. And so this great background widened and deepened. Still immature, but ever growing. The vision still dim, but becoming clearer. The idea of God more elevated, and yet

the knowledge of God more intimate as man became more aware of himself and his destiny. Prayer and confession took on a more personal note as the sense of personal holiness and social righteousness enriched its content. And with this behind Him—something greater than had been known by Greek or Roman, Hindu or Arab—Jesus began His work.

Did Jesus Really Live?—and How?

But was there ever such a person? Did Jesus actually live on this earth as we are living now? Are we not building on a foundation that has no historical reality, and trusting in a power that never existed, when we affirm that He did. Plato and Virgil, Confucius and Buddha, Mohammed and Paul might have had their entrances and exits on the stage of history, but is not Jesus a myth?

There are those who say that He is. They say that "He was not a man on earth, who became deified, but an aspect of God, His ideal love, experienced, personified, and dramatized by the early church." They say that because of the meagreness of our actual knowledge, the silence of contemporary writers, we are justified in describing Jesus as "the Great Unknown of History." Professor Schweitzer, in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, declares: "The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any

existence, but is a figure endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in a historical garb." It was not to destroy Christianity that Dr. Schweitzer wrote that, but to purify it, for in the same book he says: "The truth is it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world." But do such affirmations matter? They do when writers who reach and influence the multitude can write as Robert Blatchford in *God and my Neighbour*: "I cannot believe in the existence of Jesus Christ, nor Buddha, nor Moses." Then it becomes necessary that other authorities should be heard.

Dr. F. C. Conybeare is not a believer in what is known as orthodox Christianity, and his judgment is strictly critical when in dealing with the shallows and falsity of this "myth" suggestion, he writes in *The Historical Christ*: "We have in the historical books of the New Testament at least six monuments. All are independent of one another in style and contents, yet they all have a common interest, *viz.*, the memory of an historical man Jesus. These several traditions and documents converge on a single man, and are all and severally meaningless and their genesis impossible of explanation, unless we assume that He lived. Those writers who develop the thesis of the non-historicity of Jesus, because miracles came to be attributed to Him—

how could they not be in that age and social medium —ask us to believe in a miracle which far outweighs any which any religionists ever reported of their founder; they themselves have fallen into the fathomless depths of credulity."

If we add to this convincing testimony the verdict of Dr. Warschauer who has made this field of evidence a special study, the issue is, for us, placed beyond all doubt. In *Jesus or Christ*, Dr. Warschauer says: "Over against these isolated and erratic attacks—made from mutually irreconcilable points of view—there stands the great phalanx of present-day New Testament scholarship, composed not of obscurantists committed in advance to some timid orthodoxy, but rather of students who in these latter days conduct their investigations with the same freedom as the votaries of physical science and whose conclusions are often anything rather than conservative. Yet upon this point they are all at one—that when all the material has been sifted, all the evidence scrutinized, all the witnesses heard, and perhaps not a little that once passed as unquestioned has been marked as poetry rather than history, one fact remains unmoved and immovable—the point of departure from which our era rightly dates, the *terminus a quo* upon which nineteen centuries look back; that cardinal fact of history is Jesus Christ."

But is that enough? We may be assured that Jesus actually lived—but how did He live? Was there in His character those elements which would make Him unique—first as an attraction then as

an inspiration? Both are required in any Teacher whose range is to be world-wide, and whose mission is to reform society from emperor to slave, and from the savant to the savage. The need in man calls for a philosophy which will meet the very last and deepest call of his nature; but it is clamant that the teacher shall have exhibited in his own life a consistency with his teaching which cannot be shaken. There is less criticism here, for many of those who deny the historicity of Jesus have no quarrel with the credentials His creators gave to Him. But what is the modern testimony? It is right that this question should be asked, and the most searching of examinations made in order to answer it. The character of Jesus must be beyond suspicion if He is to be held up as guide, philosopher, and friend for all men to accept and follow. The examination has been made. As Dr. Sanday says, the furnace has been heated seven times seven. And yet Dr. Strauss, in his *Life of Jesus*, can say: "Amongst the personages to whom mankind is indebted for the perfecting of its moral consciousness, Jesus occupies at any rate the highest place. He introduced into our ideal of goodness some features in which it was deficient before He appeared. By the religious direction which He impressed upon morality, He gave it a higher consecration, and by incarnating goodness in His own person, He imparted to it a living warmth. With reference to all that bears upon the love of God and our neighbour, upon purity of life and upon the individual life, nothing can be

added to the moral intuition which Jesus Christ has left us."

English critics have been no less sure. John Stuart Mill, logician and philosopher, a democrat in politics, an agnostic in religion, and opposed to intuitionalism in mental science, in his *Essays on Theism*, says: "Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left—a unique figure; not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. Who among His disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee—still less the early Christian writers. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to the mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching upon this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." Many reservations can be recognized in this tribute, but there are none where testimony to character is required.

Lecky, the historian, one of the most brilliant scholars of his generation, and an acknowledged authority on the rise and influence of rationalism and the history of morals in Europe, writes in the same strain in his *History of European Morals:* "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions, has been not only the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of the three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."

So in the fullness of time, and with a background richer in revelation and experience than any other race had ever known, Jesus came to give to the world the light by which man could realize himself in God, in societies, and States. What did He teach concerning the three great things that matter?—God, man, and man's relations with other men.

His Light About God.

In His teaching about God, Jesus spoke lovingly of Him as a Father, who possessed a personality separate and apart from the work of His hands. At the same time He made it crystal clear that while God was infinitely greater than His creation,

the world was God's world and one in which He was consistently and actively interested.

The realm in which man lived was a particular kind of realm, with spiritual and moral aspects which were to be known and understood. The salvation of man, and his growth into a full realization of himself as man, depended upon this understanding, and the behaviour it made obligatory. God had expressed Himself in the universe, and everything in it down to the sparrow and the blade of grass was His concern. And He was to be known of all who sought Him in spirit and in truth, for God was a Spirit. The seeking soul of man could find Him at any time and in any place, and none were barred, for He made the sun to rise on the good and the evil alike, and the rain fell with the same refreshing power on the just and the unjust.

Jesus showed by example how simple and effective this approach to God could be, as again and again on the eve of great occasions He sought the solitude of a garden, or the desert, or the mountain-side, to pray. There were no barriers, and no need of intermediaries or idols. The contact was a spiritual one and it meant strength, and uplift, and exaltation, to those who sought. It was by such seeking that man would bring himself into harmony with the law controlling development in this particular world of life and action, and become himself a part of the process of harmonizing all life to its government. The profoundest revelation ever given to the world lies in the truth, that, by such a universal

reconciliation through prayer and communion, the highest type of civilization man can conceive is possible of achievement. Nor is this truth in any degree impaired by any theory of creation, or by any attempt to analyse what is meant by the quality of immanence.

Many of those who have sought to interpret God to man have not taken that view of God. It should be emphasized that it is Jesus' view of God with which we are dealing, and not the views of those who came before or after Him. Jesus did not leave His revelation of God, as a Being, to be wholly discovered by His followers. He told man of God's nature. He called Him Father—He pictured Him as Love. Power?—yes! Law-maker?—yes!—but Father, and Love. If thought convinces us of anything it convinces us that our highest conception of moral truth cannot be higher than that which exists in God. We dare not claim any other than an imperfect knowledge of morality and ethics, but we have a standard in Jesus. And His revelation of the Father makes it impossible for us to impute to God any acts or decrees which are out of harmony with our own most enlightened ideas. Failure to recognize this has been responsible for incredible mischief, and has done infinite harm to the work of reconciliation. The prophets and Psalmists who in ancient days sometimes spoke of God as if He were a glorified Oriental despot are not the final authority. They have been appealed to as if they were. Modern history can furnish many instances where their

words have been relied upon to justify the most ungodly actions between nations and men. And there have been those since Jesus' day who have travestied the revelation, and whose interpretations are no worthier of trust. To Jesus, God was the Lord and Father of all men. His Providence was over all. And His nature was Love.

That is no sooner stated than it is questioned. It is declared to be irreconcilable with the suffering and misery in the world. The objection is as old as history, and as new as to-day, and as difficult to deal with as it is old and new.

It cannot be dealt with at all if we think of God as standing apart from the world, and indifferent to its condition. It cannot be dealt with if we view God's purposes for man as merely the enjoyment of a sensual happiness, however refined. Nor do we derive much satisfaction from the thought that God's purposes are limited, and put out of joint, by the nature of the materials which are of His own creation. We do get a glimpse of light when we try to think of what is involved in the making of a moral being. We know that man has become the mental giant he is by ceaseless effort, and the conquering of difficulties. Is it not conceivable that it is only by some such incessant battle with wrong and evil that he can develop the thews of the spirit? Any alternative would seem to reduce man to an automaton, receiving gifts, but winning no victories. The process may appear to us to have been wasteful, bitter, and agonizing, but we only see it in part,

and as it is proceeding. We cannot see fully what is, and still less what is to be. And if what we see appears to be jumbled and chaotic, often terrifying us by its implacability, and bewildering us by its apparent meaninglessness, is there no help in the thought that it is out of such contests and conflicts that the moral grandeur of man has grown? Tests often seem mercilessly severe, but they have proved the stuff that is in man; and the school of nature, grim and ruthless as it often is, has called out of man a resource, courage, and endurance, he could never otherwise have known. We realize something of this when we examine our own lives.

We discover that had we missed the struggle we should have missed the crown. It is useless to dream of a perfect state of society in which free men live at peace, unless man be of a big enough stature to create it. It is just as useless to expect that man can reach such a stature except by the development of power over enemies which would keep him chained. It is still more useless to expect man to win to such heights unless there was in him an element of the Divine, sharing His travail and triumph. And the love of God as revealed by Jesus is the greatest inspiration man can know. It is a possession by means of which man can transmute the loss into gain, and convert the evil into good. Even then everything is not explained, but we have a working theory of priceless value. And as knowledge grows from more to more it is found to be increasingly satisfying.

His Truth About Man.

It is not until we grasp what Jesus taught about the value of man's life that we can reconcile ourselves to the rigour of the discipline through which man is called to pass. The note for the whole is struck when He speaks of the child. One of His most forceful pronouncements is uttered against those who cause the little ones to stumble. His comparisons of the value of man's life with other things are many and telling, but they reach their climax in the tremendous demand: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Jesus' deep sense of man's value is revealed in that He never regarded man as other than a personality, capable of exercising a choice, even to his own hurt. He never dealt with man as if He thought him at the mercy of the past, or the present. The very nature of His appeals shows that. They imply that He thought man to be possessed of a responsibility which was the basis of his moral life. Why else should He have warned men as He did? He left man in no doubt about the consequences of disobedience, and showed how evil could be overcome. He declared that He Himself had come to seek and save that which was lost—lost to themselves, and lost to God. Through faith in God, all men, to the uttermost, might be saved. The process would be slow, for there were tares in the wheat—but the issue was certain. Jesus exhibited a faith in the possibilities within man that was sublime. He dared

to predict for him, if he patiently perfected himself in God, a triumphant overcoming. How lofty this thought of man was is seen at its best when He calls man into partnership with God as a co-worker. It was God's world, and God was in it, an active participant in its life, ever seeking its highest unfolding, and man could choose to live in harmony with Him, and assist Him in the realization of His purposes.

Where else can man find such a conception of his value as this? There is no thought, here, of existence as evil, to be escaped from at the earliest possible moment. There is no suggestion that man is the puppet of fate, to be played with by merciless forces, and ultimately tossed into oblivion. We may set man on the background of infinite space and eternal time, as Haeckel in his *Riddle of the Universe* advises us to do, and find him there: "a placental mammal which has no more value for the universe at large than the ant, the fly of a summer's day, the microscopic infusorium or the smallest bacillus." But when we look at man as Jesus regarded him we see humanity to be something more than "a transitory phase of the evolution of an eternal substance; a particular phenomenal form of matter and energy." We may find him undeveloped because of lack of knowledge, and maimed and perverted because of wilful folly in sinning against the light, but we see him as Jesus saw him—the object of God's love: of such value that He sent His Son that none need perish; and Who so interpreted the Father's heart concerning

mankind that He endured the agony of the cross that all might live.

It is in this conception of God's relation to men, and of man's worth as that is revealed through his association with God, that we find the meaning of the Christian ideal for all men. It cannot be discerned otherwise. It cannot be believed in on any other interpretation of man. It is only as man identifies himself with God that he can identify himself with man in the one way necessary to secure the highest social ideal. When we consider what Jesus taught about that, this truth becomes startlingly clear.

His Programme for a Brotherhood.

Much of His teaching had to do with the attitude man should assume. In the nature of the case that was inevitable. And because it was in the nature of the case His teaching was surprising. It is not to be wondered at that those who heard it failed to grasp its significance, for it is by no means grasped yet. It was so contrary then to what was accepted: it is so contrary now to what is assumed. It was new to so much of their thought that their attitude toward men should be determined by their sense of identification with God, and His purposes, and not by their own personal well-being. That understanding of attitude is as alien to much of our thought to-day. But it is fundamental to all social reform. There is no other foundation that is either adequate or trustworthy. This is not readily conceded, and is generally denied, but it stands for the examination of the world.

The key to everything lies in seeing God—that this is God's world, and that He is working in it to achieve His purposes, here and now. That is the experience of those who have the pure heart. Others are blind, and have no knowledge of what is taking place. They are out of harmony with a world movement, and by breaking its laws are constantly exposed to penalties. The pure heart is the nursery of meekness, mercy, and the desire to make peace—to reconcile all men to God that all men should know the same impulses, and be prompted by the same motives. Such men, living in this sense of union, and seeing with this clarity of vision, would be forgiving. They would forgive to the uttermost. They could do no other, for they would recognize that forgiveness was of the very nature of God. And forgiveness would be accompanied by a more active expression of their understanding, for they would love their enemies. This does not call for the outraging of an emotion as might be thought ; but for the recognition of a need, and an activity adequate to meet it. They would go farther than that for they would not resist evil—a teaching as unacceptable then as now.

But the question is not whether this teaching is unacceptable or abhorrent. The question is whether it represents the moral law of the universe. If it does, then it is God's way of developing the life of this particular world, which is His world, and in which He is actively at work. If it does, then, however unacceptable or abhorrent, if man is to

be progressively happy, and increasingly efficient as the builder of an ideal society, he must go the extra mile that is required of him. We have already gone so far on the way as to discover that the man who creates goodwill by consideration for others, without distinction, even against his own interests, has gained more than he has lost.

How, otherwise, except by the cultivation of this attitude, can man hope to carry out the more positive duties of his social relationships? The Fatherhood of God carries with it the brotherhood of man—and in that very concept there lies an obligation as wide as the world, and as universal as mankind. Jesus taught that there were no reserves. Jew and Greek, Scythian and Barbarian bond and free, were all included in this Commonwealth of the Spirit. Jesus broke down all barriers of caste and class, of race and colour, when He estimated the worth of man's life. There was an aristocracy in this Republic of God, but it was the aristocracy of service. "... whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 43-45). That was the standard He Himself had set, and that was to be the standard for those who followed Him.

The policy for man and for nations was clear—it was to be social and redemptive. And it was a policy which could not be broken with impunity, for it was a part of the moral law which ran in the

world, and its violation brought its own punishments. The man who hid his talent was unsocial, and cast out ; as was the man who failed to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, or visit those who were in prison. Service, and service for others, and service that is social and redemptive, is the acid test. To render such service is to build the house of life on a rock : to withhold it is to build upon the sand.

Jesus taught as clearly as it could be taught that righteousness was a cosmic process, and that man's development as an individual, and in his social relationships of every kind, depended on his knowing that, and living in harmony with it. The worth of man's personal life was bound up with his recognition of his social duties. He was an individual, but the quality of his individuality was decided by the expression of a right attitude toward other individuals. There should be no place in that attitude for any such anti-social elements as hatred or revenge. They acted injuriously upon society, but they reacted just as injuriously upon man himself. Man must entertain as high a regard for the potentiality within his neighbour, whether developed or undeveloped, as he claimed should be shown to his own. As he valued his own life, so should he value others. As his own sense of personal values increased, so should his sense of the value of others be deepened. And every ascent in his own conception of personal value imposed upon him a greater obligation to develop the value in others.

Jesus never taught that this tremendous revolution in what is generally regarded as man's natural

attitude toward other men would come with revolutionary swiftness. There were those in His own time, as there have been in every age since, who thought it would. It would come quietly, slowly, almost secretly, and surprisingly—" . . . first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." It would come because it was in the eternal purpose of God that it should come—but not arbitrarily. It would come because man desired that it should come, and would work for it. Its progress would be determined by man's identification with God in bringing it to pass. As through communion and prayer man's knowledge of God grew, and he became in fuller degree a co-operator with God: as in consequence of this his attitude toward men changed and his interpretation of brotherhood took on a richer content: as he ceased to be acquisitive in the selfish sense and became the distributor of forces which worked like leaven in the meal—so would the light spread, the truth penetrate, and the ideal become more clear.

If Jesus had left the matter there—simply outlining a social attitude and relationship of the highest value—it would have been more a mockery than an inspiration. It is conceivable that man can build up a system of conduct based upon some dimly conceived law of self-preservation, but the developed systems of morality are mainly the result of some religious belief. A religion which does not enjoin a system of morality is no better than a superstition or a caricature; and any claim to be religious which does not recognize the obligation

to be moral in the sense imposed by the religion, is a travesty and a sham.

When we think of the kind of morality which Jesus taught, we recognize at once that its realization in the life of society is only possible as man embraces a religion, which at the same time is its inspiration and power. Left to himself, thinking only of his self-preservation, interest, advantage, and advancement, man would fail utterly to reach out and up to such a range and height of character and relationship. Jesus taught that before man could be the creator of a social order in which life could burgeon to its fullest beauty, he must love God with his whole heart, and strength, and mind. That was the necessary condition to loving his neighbour as himself. The second was impossible without the first. He taught that His mission was to bring man into this relationship with God and men, and He exemplified it by His life and death.

But this relationship was conditioned, as all relationships are. There must be repentance and faith, leading to union with the Father. From that union would spring, not only a sense of relationship and obligation, but the impulses and the strengths requisite for the discharge of the duties associated with them. In that union there was a new birth, the release of new energies, and the discovery of new resources. He Himself was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He was the Son of God, and He came down from Heaven to do the will of God, that He might reconcile man to God. It was by faith in His redeeming love, and by

devotion to Him, that man could enter into union with the Father which should make him a co-worker in His gracious purposes concerning all mankind.

Thus, Jesus not only expounded a relationship between men, but He guaranteed it. He dealt with the principles of this relationship rather than with particular instances—and how profoundly wise that was all the ages since have shown—and He guaranteed the power to establish them. He taught of a world-order—which the natural man even now declares to be beyond achievement, but which He brought into the realm of the practicable and the attainable. Moreover, it is the only world-order which can abide, and it cannot be attained in any other way. Morality of a supreme degree cannot persist without the inspiration of a religion as its source of strength and growth, and all attempts to establish it must fail. The price of peace is good-will, and goodwill of the required attitude and service is the outcome of union through Jesus with God.

It is often urged that if this theory of life were a liveable one, it would have demonstrated itself by this time as universally workable. It is claimed that the world has had knowledge of it for two thousand years, and where it has not rejected it, it has failed to live up to it. That is not true. It is not true that the world has had knowledge of it. It is not true that it has wholly failed. In the life of man on the earth two thousand years is a mere bagatelle, and yet in those two thousand years the leaven has worked mightily. It now remains to be told how it has worked, where it has failed, and why it has triumphed.

CHAPTER VI.

Shattering the Darkness of a World in Ruin.

IT is difficult to think ourselves back into the atmosphere of our own past. It is far more difficult to think ourselves back into a past of which we have no personal knowledge. It is almost impossible to capture the atmosphere, or be conscious of the environment, in which the early followers of Jesus had their being. It is necessary that we should try, if only to see how they were situated, what they attempted, and what they achieved. We may not discover much, but we shall find that in the earliest days the teachings of Jesus were not without fruit. We shall have to admit that it was a miracle for there to be any fruit at all. Such a survey, too, will afford the fullest answer to those whose complaint it is that Christianity has achieved so little in the time it has been at work.

The policy of the Roman Empire toward religion was a liberal one. Unless religion entered into conflict with morality, or sought to overthrow the supremacy of the Roman religion—which was mainly a ritual, and a worship of the Emperor—it

was tolerated. The same toleration was generally shown to Christianity as was shown to those forms of religion which worshipped Greek and other gods, until it began to express itself in Rome. Then the case was altered. This was no complacent faith which would adapt itself to Roman custom, and acknowledge the god-like supremacy of any Emperor, or even recognize the virtues of the Roman State. There is little wonder that Christianity called down on its head a suspicion which made the worst of its practices, and thought the worst of its claims. It only needed that the Emperor Nero, in A.D. 64, should make Christians the scapegoat for the great fire to bring about their virtual outlawry. As the accused enemies of the worship of the Emperor and the State, of morality and religion, the Christians were at the mercy of all those in authority who were inclined to punish and exterminate. At first the persecution was mainly confined to Rome, but the claims of Domitian toward the end of the first century that he was "Lord and God" widened its range. This claim was intolerable to the Christians, and their resistance led to their being regarded as criminals. It was not very long before the time came when for a man to declare himself a Christian was at the same time to declare himself a criminal.

The Living Cells.

There is little wonder that the Christian should be treated with contempt by the Roman, proud of his mighty Empire; or the Greek, equally proud of his culture. The little bands of Christians who gathered

together were not even as the Jews, whose bonds were those of racial pride and unity. Most of them were poor, some of them slaves, and they probably lived in the most crowded and squalid quarters of the towns and cities. They had no claim to culture ; they repudiated the old gods and philosophies ; they refused to join in the social usages of the time ; they worshipped a king of their own who had been put to death as a malefactor, and whom they claimed would return and reign as king. They met in secret, pursued by fear and yet fearless of their fate ; fanatical and extravagant often through excess of fear, or from expectation of a speedy justification. Suspicion was natural. There would be rumours of plots and revolution being hatched at these secret meetings, and extravagant exaggeration of simple rites into loathsome and fantastic orgies. Christians would be regarded as a danger to the State a pestilent brood to be exterminated. That is as they would be seen by those who sought to cleanse the State from an evil it could not understand, and which it was beginning to fear.

We see a different picture of these little groups gathered in Thessalonica and Galatia, in Corinth, Rome and Ephesus, in Colosse, Philippi, and Jerusalem, if we look at them through Paul's eyes. Not all the men and women of the rank and file were of a class to be despised, for while some he mentions had been slaves or were yet slaves, others could claim both standing and culture. We know some of their names, and where they lived ; their faith, and heroism, and saintly lives ; their loyalty to Jesus,

and their enthusiasm for His cause. It is true that in some cases these little groups needed reproving and exhortation, and these were given: but the letters sent to them were not merely castigations for misdemeanours. They were full of thanksgiving for victories won, and encouragement to attempt greater things. The marvel is not that rebuke should have been called for, but, that living in such an environment, it should have been possible for them to appreciate the lofty teaching such letters as those to the Corinthians and the Romans contained. That they were cherished and preserved is the proof that they were not written in vain. Let those who complain of Christianity's slow growth try to imagine the purely political oppressions of the first century of Christian work.

It is not to be assumed because of this opposition that the government within the Empire was uncouth or tyrannous. On the whole it was a well-governed world, giving a large measure of freedom to the parts within it, and offering little objection to movement from one part to another. It was a prosperous world, too, and not unfriendly to education. There was a university at Athens, lecturers travelled much and were assured of audiences and a good hearing, and religion claimed its share of interest and attention. How far this diffused and superficial intellectual and religious activity affected the life of the people is gathered from contemporary records. The most cursory glance at them will show that combating the evils which were rampant offered to the early Christians a more formidable task than

that presented by political oppression or even Jewish hate.

Much of the looseness of morals which prevailed at this time is traceable to Greek influence. In contrast with the influence of the Jews—which was towards austerity, the keeping of the law and formality, and a tendency to self-righteousness—that of the Greek, disdaining shackles, and claiming a freedom which gave full reign to the passions, ended in licentiousness. There were, in addition, many religious usages borrowed from Eastern faiths which fed, and in a measure justified, this lowering of moral standards, and made immorality a thing of merit. Side by side with a wide toleration and the growth of much that was commendable, there was a decadence and a perversion of faith in the ancient gods—the latter being specially notable in the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. The rapid growth of city life, and the increasingly ostentatious luxury of the rich, was accompanied by a further degradation and enslavement of the poor.

The Lump to be Leavened.

Of the condition of Rome itself Paul leaves us in no doubt. It may be urged that he presented the worst side of the city's life in order to secure a more effective contrast for the fruits of his own teaching about the work of Christ, but even so he would not paint the picture so erroneously as to affront his readers, and detract from the value of his message. He was too sane, and too much in earnest, to be guilty of such an indiscretion. The credibility of

his witness is amply supported by others, whose knowledge was first hand, and whose testimony could not be accused of being coloured by prejudice. Mr. Lecky in his *History of European Morals* speaks of the pages of Suetonius being "an eternal witness of the abyss of depravity, the hideous and intolerable cruelty, the hitherto unimagined extravagances of nameless lust that were then manifested on the Palatine." Seneca spoke of Rome as a cesspool of iniquity. Juvenal described her as a filthy sewer into which flowed the abominable dregs of every Achaean and Syrian stream. The very amusements were arranged to pander to lust and cruelty, and so gross was the licentiousness that serious inroads were made into the ties of family and social relationships.

Such was Rome, the central city of the world, the city of world-dominion, the friend of liberty and culture, and tolerant of religion. Sin was grotesque and disgusting, and openly indulged. Men sinned flagrantly and violently against the light they had, and flouted the ties that had held their civilization together. And as it was in Rome so it was in Corinth, the trading and maritime centre of Greece, and a city great in political and intellectual influence. Corinth was so given over to sensuality, much of which was due to its association with the temple rites of Aphrodite, that life was sapped by it. The cities of Asia Minor were similarly affected and afflicted. Professor McGiffert in his *Apostolic Age* says: "Off the great lines of travel frugality, simplicity, and austerity were still dominant, but everywhere else luxury, debauchery and sensuality ran riot."

There were exceptions, and as it has been pointed out, not all that which was good in the ancient religions was lost. There were philosophers and moralists who urged a higher standard of life, but their conceptions were faulty and their remedies lacked the power of conviction. In spite of them the temples were debased by the grosser forms of impurity, the details of which are ghastly in their coarse brutality. It was an age of ennui, despair, and suicide.

Many of those who were won into the new companionship with Jesus came from this environment and experience. The taint of it was in their blood. The seduction of it was about them in their daily lives. They had no help, but only opposition, from the spirit of the time. They were ridiculed, hated, and persecuted. Is it to be wondered at that some of them stood in need of rebuke for relapsing or being weak? The tests were fiery, and the penalties heavy. The poorest of them did not escape from their taskmasters, and were still the victims of their power. It was not easy to preserve even a semblance of the purity their new allegiance demanded, still less to change the order in the midst of which they lived.

It has been urged that the first century of Christian activity was barren of social results because of the belief in the personal return of the Master. That tended, it is asserted, to an intensive spiritual individualism, selfish in its content, and which gave little thought to others. That contention is not true, although there was no organized attempt to abolish slavery, or to secure the radical reform of

labour, or of civic or economic conditions. There had scarcely been time to grasp such great sweeps of change. They would have taxed the resources of a vast organization, recognized, rich, and powerful. What chance had those scattered communities, even though they increased mightily, of touching ancient and deeply rooted customs and traditions to such an issue? It is true that there were those who traded upon the prospect of the coming of the King, but they were reproved for their indolence, and exhorted to a better way of life. It is still more true to say that the horror expressed in the Book of Revelation at the social order obtaining, was shared by the early Christians as a whole. If they looked for a sovereignty of Christianity on earth it was to one in which righteousness should reign. Because of this, society would be radically changed. It was probably because they taught this that they aroused so much hostility. In the meantime, within the limits of their opportunity, they began to practice what they could of the principles of the new order.

It has been said that there were wild and fanatical zealots among the early Christians, and that is probably true. But the rapid spread of the new faith was not due to them. From the beginning Christianity was a world-saving passion, and in the spirit of its Master it sought the hopeless and abandoned. The object was not the building up of a system, or the exaltation of a creed, but the saving of men. The aggressive power behind it, which caused it to win its way through the cities of the Roman Empire, was a pure and passionate love of

souls, in which there was a real humanitarian content. The early Christians laboured in an alien world. They were outcast and suspect by Jew, and Greek, and Roman alike. They were treated with contempt, and loathing, and delivered to death. They exhibited a new type of character, and one which meant more than an obedience to a law, for it demanded union with a spirit—they had to keep faith with Christ, and with man for His sake. And if at first their social activities were limited in range, they gave an indication of what they would later become.

It would be a mistake to condemn those first social endeavours as narrow and parochial because they were largely concerned with the Christian poor. Many became poor because they embraced Christianity itself. At a time when to become a Christian meant to be boycotted there was urgent need that some provision should be made to relieve distress. And this was made. The needy, the sick, the imprisoned, the widow and the orphan, were a sacred trust to be undertaken in the spirit of the Master they served. This called for more than sacrificial giving—it called for the practising of what was more difficult—the recognition of the Brotherhood of man in Jesus. But it called for sacrificial giving, too. Out of their poverty they gave to those in greater need. The *Apology of Aristide* says: "If there is among them one that is poor and needy and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food." Nor was this care of the destitute spasmodic and intermittent. It was

enjoined and required as a test and proof of the indwelling of the Spirit of Jesus. At the Council of Jerusalem, Paul gave as proof that the Gentile Christians had the root of the matter in them, his assurance that they would contribute to the assistance of the poor saints at Jerusalem.

It is still less sound to assume that the first Christian Commune failed because it was unsound in principle. That it did fail is but a proof that it is impossible to build an ideal community except the material employed be of the requisite character. The system would be open to abuse, and it was abused. At the same time it was a foreshadowing of many things, and it was a warrant of what was thought to be the essential verdict of the Gospel. Nor is it fair to conclude because there was no regular attack on slavery as an institution, and no call for the immediate emancipation of women, that there was no perception of the moral and social inequity of these things. What we have to look for in those early days is not a perfected consciousness about society, but the first output of a conscience, and we find that to be in the right direction every time. With the passing of the expectation of a spectacular setting up of a new state of society, and the growth of the belief that it could only come by consistent Christian effort, this developing conscience became more active, and applied itself to the task. It was impossible for the followers of Jesus to realize how great a task it was. Even when they grew in number and influence they were utterly inadequate to what was demanded. The rot had gone too deep for the

Empire to be saved. And it has to be admitted that then, as now, there were those whose understanding of the social implications of their faith was far from acute.

It would be grossly unfair to forget the perspective in which those early Christians stood. They were surrounded by a great Pagan order, corrupted by selfishness, luxury, and impurity. They would feel the impact of this condition more than others, for they lived amongst the poor, and saw the workings out of moral and social evils in a thousand tyrannies and injustices. At no time were they ever in a position to compel a change. In the earlier years their slightest attack on existing social forms was met by the charge of revolutionary treason. Later, when through greater numbers and influence they could raise their voices, as they did, there was no vehicle of popular representative government by which they could make themselves politically felt. Even when under Christian Emperors the Church was identified with the State, its power was never great enough to re-mould what was rapidly falling into decay. But even though its voice was like that of one crying in the wilderness, it was lifted up, and it did not cry in vain.

It is too much to expect that at first anything like a clearly thought out theory of society could have been evolved. That calls for a leisure, and a vastness of experience, to which the Christians could make no claim. And if, even by a miracle of chances, there had been idealists and thinkers competent for this, its acceptance would have been dependent

upon a populace willing to embrace it. Neither were present, and to have expected it to be present would have done violence to all we know of human processes. Yet reforms were made, and they came as the direct result of the calls from Christian men.

The question arises why such a call should begin to triumph where other teaching of a high ethical and moral character had failed. The answer is found in the difference between a philosophy and a religion, and in the way in which the two were promulgated. Philosophy, however exalted in tone or ethical in quality, was the speculation of the few, and had little influence upon the masses of mankind. Attempts had been made to overcome this difficulty, but they had been spasmodic and intermittent. To the early Christians moral culture was an essential part of religion, which exercised its teaching and its discipline for the moral regeneration of mankind. Christianity had its philosophy of God, of the immortality of the soul, of the duties of man, and it taught them everywhere, emphasizing the value of every human soul, and the necessity that it should be cleansed from sin. The Pagan made no higher appeal than that man should imitate a god, or follow reason. The Christian exhorted man to love Jesus, and become like Him. Nor was this all. The early Christians exhibited in their lives a moral purity which has rarely been surpassed. Arising from this profound sense of the value of human life, and of the ties which bound all men together in Jesus, there sprang a fraternity of interest and responsibility which was new in the life of the world.

The Springs of Renewal.

This is to be seen in the writings of the time. The *Epistle to Diognetus*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *First Epistle of Clement of Rome*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Preaching of Peter*, all second century writings, bear witness to this fraternal responsibility, and urge its recognition. As the soul is imprisoned in the body and preserves the body, so Christians are imprisoned in the world and preserve the world. Happiness comes not by lordship and riches, but by bearing the burdens of the weak. The way of light is to care for the widow and the orphan, the poor, and the oppressed. The great must concern themselves about those of little repute and significance, and seek to strengthen the whole brotherhood by thought for them that are feebly endowed. Riches, and gifts, and power, are to be regarded as a stewardship, and must be employed for the good of all. This is the note of true social service, inspired by the teaching of Jesus, and insisted upon as a condition of true following.

The same strain runs through the writings of the early Christian Fathers. Justin Martyr wrote in the second century: "We who would not so much as warm ourselves at the same fire with those of a different tribe on account of different institutions, now, since the coming of Christ, company and diet together, and pray for our enemies. Of all men living we are the greatest promoters of peace." Tertullian regarded the world as "a vast republic, a great family of God's children," and developed a Christian doctrine of property. Origen, and

Cyprian, betrayed the same feeling of society as a whole—a feeling much more strongly felt by Lactantius in the first quarter of the third century. To him the evils in the society about him were due to a lack of the spirit of brotherhood—a spirit born of unity with God and man. In his *Divine Institutes* and *Property* he gives clear evidence of a highly developed sense of social obligation, and of what the purpose of a truly Christian society must be. Later, in the same century, John Chrysostom —whose sermons are fearless in their insistence on social reform—has the temerity to say: "Do not imagine an injury to a slave will be regarded as indifferent because it is only to a slave. The laws of the world see a difference between the two races, but the laws of the Commonwealth of God ignore it."

By the middle of the fourth century this conception of the teaching of Jesus about the value of life, and the duties of relationship, had gained in strength, and with the increasing power of Churchmen found clearer expression. Ambrose of Milan could write to his clergy: "Your office will shine gloriously, if the oppression of widows and orphans attempted by the powerful should be hindered by the servants of the Church; if you show that the commandment of the Lord is more to you than the favour of the rich." This high sense of social responsibility is seen at its best in Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, to whom there could be no true society unless all men in it loved God and his neighbour as himself. The true Christian must live for the good of his neighbour. Selfishness was the supreme sin

against human society, and true justice was impossible where it existed. He was no less outspoken in his disdain of war, which he described as being unnatural even among wild beasts. So profound was the insight of this truly great man into what constituted the principles of a great and stable society that Rudolf Eucken says of him in *The Problem of Human Life*, "if we mean to take up again the problem of human life and religion we must go back to Augustine in order to understand the present."

These writings reflect what was passing through the minds of those who were responsible for the teaching and leadership of the new faith. It was progressive in its development, and from the first it was intensely social in its content. So long as the scattered communities had to worship in secret they could do little to alter customs engrained by long usage, and sanctioned by tradition and law. They taught a nobler morality than ever Roman moralists had taught, associated with a gentleness, born of love, finer than the Greeks had ever known, and linked with a worship loftier and more pure than had ever come from the East. The sum total of what they achieved should not be dismissed lightly because they were unable to save an Empire which had been tottering to its fall too long. Nor is it to be decried because later centuries lost the fervour and glow which characterized their day. They laid certain stones in the foundations of the world's life which have never been destroyed, and upon which later builders have built with confidence and hope.

There is a type of man who cannot be convinced of any good done by any organization or institution unless it is something which can be weighed and measured. It is impossible to use scales or yard-sticks for the evaluation of an influence, or a spirit, and yet these have been of the greatest value in the preservation and establishing of civilization. If nothing more can be claimed for Christianity than that in the earlier centuries it diffused a new spirit, that is no small claim, for it was that spirit which kept hope alive, when the civilization of Rome crashed into ruin. The world had known nothing like that appalling catastrophe. It was unbelievable that such an unparalleled structure of law and administration should break—and when, in spite of its great past, its great names, and its great deeds, it went down, it was just as unbelievable that the world would ever see its like again. That an even greater has arisen is true, and much of its greatness is due to the fact that new races have had to do with the building of it, but the new builders were influenced by the spirit of the new morality. That the new morality was the fruit of the Christian spirit is undeniable. Roman morality had decayed until it was enfeebled. It had no springs of renewal. Its peaks were frozen and forbidding. Its impulse was stifled and dead. Christian morality was a vastly different thing. It renewed itself in Jesus. It strengthened itself in its reflections on the awful grandeur of human life, as He had taught. It believed in human regeneration, in the overcoming of all evil, and in the ultimate triumph of

righteousness. Those who under this new inspiration practised the new law of life did not register much in the shape of constructive reform, but they set in operation a movement by which much would be wrought in the time to come. They were the sowers in the dawn of the day—a wintry dawn with little promise of the spring in it—but they did not hold their hands because of the unpropitious skies or the frost-bound earth. They were the sowers of a spirit which was to give to law a new interpretation, to patriotism and citizenship a new content, to the sense of unity a new bond. There was nothing great in the old order but would be revivified and enriched by this spirit as would be the greatest thoughts of its greatest minds. It was not without its more immediate and practical effects as we shall see, but in this it was a saving strength. It was a spirit born of a knowledge of God, of the world of men, of the relationship that should exist among men ; and it was fed and nourished by a passionate love for the Teacher, who by His word, and life, and death, had made it the message of their redemption.

Life's New Value.

One of the first fruits of this spirit was a new belief in the sanctity of human life. The absence of this belief had not been thought to be inconsistent with many high personal and social ideals. Plato could recommend infanticide, and Pliny applauded the gladiatorial games. It was left for Christianity to set up a new standard, and to assert that all destruction of human life as a matter of amusement,

or convenience, was a sin against God. It found its earliest expression in its protest against abortion, which it denounced as murder. The Pagan world held no such view, and even where it was condemned the condemnation meant little. To the early Christian Church this practice was held to be as heinous an offence as infanticide, and in the discipline of the church was as severely punished. It may be that this concern for the unborn was based upon a belief that the unbaptized were condemned to hell, but whatever inspired the concern it was there.

The early Christian attitude to infanticide was stern and unyielding. Among the Greeks this crime against childhood was not only widely prevalent, but encouraged by idealists and legislation. In Rome the policy was different, and infanticide was not countenanced, although it is admitted that the laws condemning it were constantly evaded. Exposure of children, but a degree less criminal, was practised with impunity, and rarely if ever punished by law. The unfortunate wights so exposed were usually taken by speculators, and trained to be slaves or prostitutes. If these hideous wrongs were not wholly wiped out by the early Christian Church they were greatly lessened. That the attempt was made is a remarkable tribute to the belief in the worth of the individual life, which was something entirely alien to the genius of Paganism.

The fight against gladiatorial games was a long one, and had many phases, but from the first the Christian attitude was one of uncompromising

hostility. This was in striking contrast to the Pagan attitude which fostered them, or at the best, whilst denouncing them as vulgar and degrading, yet remained indifferent. Pagan philosophy could never have extirpated them. Nothing less virile than the passionate belief in the sanctity of life held by the Christian was strong enough to tear this evil custom out of the life of the age. The month of December, which in the Roman world was the great season for these brutalizing and degrading spectacles, was consecrated by the festival commemorating the birth of Christ.

The critic of the lack of effectiveness of early Christian influence will find much to confound him when he turns his attention to slavery. In all fairness he must admit the difficulties which existed, and be prepared to give value to an attitude which was created. It is impossible for us to realize the magnitude of the difficulties. We do know, however, that long established custom is not easily altered: and we know that a vital antecedent to any radical change is a new attitude. If the early Christian failed to abolish slavery as an institution, so that it lingered on in Europe for many centuries, that is not to say that their work in this direction was a failure. They achieved something mightier than the ending of an institution. They created a spirit which made its continuing impossible.

The Dawn of Emancipation.

In the Pagan world the legitimacy of slavery was fully recognized. The moralists had insisted

on the natural equality of all mankind, and stressed the superficial difference between master and slave, but the institution was regarded as sound in law and practice. Laws were strengthened for the protection of the slave against inhuman treatment, and these remained practically unchanged for centuries. There were many loopholes, however, which permitted of cruelty, and there were owners who took advantage of them.

It is early evident that the form Christian manifestation was to take, lay, first of all, in the preparation of the slave himself. The first signs of real progress began under Justinian. He abolished all the Pagan restrictions upon the enfranchisement of the slave, and encouraged the Church's efforts to make manumission an increasing practice, and a sacred celebration. He gave to the freedman a new status. He had been regarded as neither slave nor citizen, and he now became a citizen, entitled to most, if not all, the privileges of citizenship. This had the most important results, for it meant that after manumission a female slave might marry a citizen of any rank. A still further piece of humane legislation punished the rape of a slave woman as severely as if the victim had been free. But in all this slavery was still recognized by Christianity; and it could be argued that the great moralists had taught as much about equality as the Christian Fathers. But there were certain influences which the latter set to work which were destined to make an end of slavery for all time.

The first of these was the establishing of a new order of relations between citizen and slave. In all Church ceremonies every distinction vanished. In the worship of God, in the partaking of the sacraments, in the offering of prayers, there was neither bond nor free. In the place, and at the time, when the deepest impressions were made, there was an equality of need as there was an equality of ministration. This new conception of relationship, amounting to far more than the moralists' theoretic assertion of equality, was still more emphasized in the discipline of the Church. The civil law recognized a distinction between certain wrongs done to a citizen, and a slave, but the courts of the Church knew no such difference. The civil law might not take action against a master who had scourged a slave to death, but the Church penalized him. The civil law might look leniently upon the violation of the chastity of a slave, but the Church exacted punishment. A slave-born man might become a priest and exercise the rights of his sacred office over the wealthiest in the land.

The second of the great influences which in those far-off days Christianity exerted upon the position of the slave was found in the new dignity it gave to the class. The slave had been held in contempt. There were a few exceptions to this general estimate, and, if a superficial examination of a condition is held to be sufficient, there was much to justify the general contempt. To the Roman, dignity, independence, and self-reliance, were the marks of character to be admired, and these were

lacking in the slave. It would have been remarkable had it been otherwise. Generations of abject servility are not likely to produce an independent, dignified, and self-reliant type. Nor was the Roman cultivation of a spirit of self-reliance and independence, coupled with a contempt for the servile, likely to produce gentleness, tenderness, and obedience to the call of a high chivalry. The Christian attitude was a very different one. Jesus had taught that every life was of value in its own content, and in the sight of His Father. He had taught that it was the duty of the privileged to elevate those who were less privileged. He had taught that that was an essential part of His great work, and that those who followed Him must carry it on. They were not only called to a higher sense of relationship, but they were made to see that such a position carried with it a moral obligation. Virtues, unknown, ignored, or despised, were to be practised. Multitudes were now responding to the appeal which meant much more than the creation of a new class-consciousness. It created a new type. The slave's personal and political freedom were not yet given, but his spiritual emancipation had begun. This moral regeneration struck the first blow at the old contempt of master for slave, and set a door ajar which later days were to open wide.

It will be said that while these were great influences, and calculated to affect the lives of men for unbounded good, they were ameliorative and did not mean freedom. That is true, but Christianity

was unceasing in its efforts to secure freedom. The religious character of manumission was strengthened and encouraged. Slaves were freed to expiate sins, to celebrate festivals, to give thanks for recovery from sickness, on the birth of a child, at the hour of death, and by will and testament. If this form of liberation was an act of grace, or to win favour with God, and not an act of political justice, it was not a negligible result of an influence working in many ways. The citadel of slavery was a strong one, but the process of undermining never slackened, and the mind of man slowly absorbed its meaning.

There is no finer tribute to the spirit of Jesus working in the hearts of men to succour the unfortunate, than that contained in the redemption of captives from servitude. The barbarian invasions not only depopulated mighty cities, laid waste fertile plains, slew the strength and flower of manhood, but led thousands captive. To recover such who were held captive Ambrose sold the rich ornaments of Milan, although he was denounced as guilty of atrocious sacrilege. His example was followed by many others. This truly wonderful spirit was not confined to the liberation of Roman prisoners alone. The Persians were bitterly hostile to Christianity, but when 7,000 Persian prisoners fell into Roman hands, and their captors refused to support them, Acacius, the Bishop of Amida, "sold all the rich ornaments of his diocese, rescued the unbelieving prisoners, and sent them back unharmed to their king." He said: "God had no

need of plates or dishes." When the invasions of Goths and Vandals were followed long afterwards by those of the Mohammedans, the same unselfish and sacrificing help was given. This cannot be claimed as constructive. It did not issue in immediate Acts of Parliament. But it was one of those giant forces in the life of the world, working for the creation of a new order, and without which nothing great can be done.

The Grace of Charity.

In the consideration of the great influences which had their rise among the early Christians, the beginnings of Christian charity must not be overlooked. It cannot be said that the poor of the Roman Empire were neglected. Great numbers were slaves, and the care of their masters. The poor citizens were the charge of the State. This class was a large one, and their needs were met, either by a free distribution of corn, or its sale at a nominal charge. The custom differed in time and place. Sometimes oil, salt, bread, and pork, were given, or sold at a fraction of their cost. In the main the motive behind this charity was political, arousing no sense of benefaction in the giver, and awakening no sense of gratitude in the recipient. Not infrequently it set a premium on idleness with disastrous consequences to the morale of the people, and the well-being of the State. Land was made available for the landless, large legacies were left for the benefit of the poor by the rich, schools and baths were furnished, children were

made the special care of the State or Province; but in spite of this abundant provision, dictated by policy rather than benevolence, there was yet a large measure of unrelieved distress. There were individual instances of private charity, but it was by no means an essential part of the life of the time.

With the Christian, charity was a rudimentary virtue. It was held to be necessary to the culture of the affections, and the poor were to be helped out of love for Jesus, Whose they were. In their poorest days Christians made collections for this purpose, and in more opulent days institutions, altogether unknown to the Pagan world, were opened. The first hospital was founded at Rome in the 4th century by a Roman lady called Fabiola, and this act of gracious ministry was imitated by others. There were asylums for lepers, refuges for strangers, care for the blind, widows, and orphans. Nor was this amazing new phenomenon in the life of the world due to the promptings of a benevolence divorced from a higher motive. It was born of a belief that man should regard himself as a steward of possessions, and administer his supply for the good of others. The teaching of Jesus concerning relations and responsibility was bearing fruit.

The quality and the catholicity of this spirit of charity among the early Christians was tested by pestilence, famine, and the horrors of invasion. The freed slave as well as the heathen and Pagan prisoner were charges on their mercy and help. When Goths and Huns and Vandals poured into the land, spreading ruin and desolation, the Church

was a sanctuary, and the servant of God was often a mediator to save a remnant from destruction. The clergy came to be regarded as trustees for the poor, and wealth came to them for distribution. When leprosy ravaged Europe, and the minds of men were filled with terror because of its loathsomeness and its contagion, monks manned hospitals and refuges built to meet the need. Much could be written about the evils of indiscriminate charity, and upon a charity which is selfish and undeserving of the name, and much has been written. There is no virtue but it can be abused, and charity is no exception. Abuse, however, is no argument against the value of true charity, nor does it minimize the value of this new inspiration which came into the hearts of men at this early date. It came as a result of the teaching of Jesus, and was born of a desire to be obedient to His command. In its details of application and development it may have erred, but that is due to faults of education and understanding. The ultimate good of mankind will be determined by the spirit in which the problems of mankind are attacked, and this spirit of charity is at the same time a contribution and a guide.

There are those who, even to-day, complain about what they call the other-worldliness of the Church and its teaching. They insist that the test of a faith is its utilitarianism, and forget that actions which are utilitarian do not arise spontaneously out of nothing. There must be imagination before there can be construction, just as there must be motive before there can be sustained

action. If motive is to be exalted, and construction something more than an expedient, then imagination must be inspired by lofty and sustained emotions. It has been found in the experience of men that nothing can do this like the great appeals of a spiritual religion. When this is viewed from one aspect it might seem as if it possessed no value other than an emotional one, but that would be to do it a great injustice. To elevate the mind, and to stir the heart; to widen the horizon and bring within the survey all mankind; to insist upon purity of life and charity of dispensation; to link these things with the worship of a God who is holy, and a Saviour who is a Redeemer, is to infuse something into life which purifies and illuminates, and which issues in a utilitarianism of the truest kind. There can be no permanent utilitarianism without it.

Of itself this spiritual imagination is ethereal and insubstantial, the stuff of which dreams are made; but it is the stuff which makes dreams come true. It needs to be focussed and stabilized, and that is the function of thought, but without it thought would avail little. Goodwill has no substance that it can be dealt with as a coiner deals with gold, or a chemist with a salt, but it is the greatest of all solvents, as it is the mightiest of all cements. And the teaching of Jesus about God, about Himself, about man and his relationships and his future, stirred the imagination of the multitudinous poor and oppressed as nothing else had done. The gods of the Greeks had held no

such magnetic power, nor had the maxims of the moralists of Rome exercised such persuasive appeal. Iron must glow before it can be wrought into beauty, and human nature must be softened before it can be built into ideal societies. If those early centuries did no more than create a spiritual imagination they achieved a majestic success.

It would be foolish to try to prove too much. There is nothing easier than to show that during those generations there was much of error and fault: wrong thinking and unwise action. No stage in the evolution of human society has been free from failure. The marvel is that so much was wrought. When we think of the background against which this new Teacher and His teaching was set—its cruelty and despair, despite its culture and its morality—and when we think that love of Him and His teaching created a spirit which could do so much for the child and the slave, the sick and the poor, transcending the barriers of caste and race—we are awed by the wonder of it, and see in it the light of a great promise. The spirit was the spirit of reform. If the reforms were slow and partial they were fundamental. If their conceptions were inadequate, or their administrations faulty, something had been born which would never die. The first centuries proved that Jesus stood supreme—high above every other thinker or inspirer of men—the hope and guarantee of the best that the inspired imagination of man could desire.

CHAPTER VII.

The Greek and the Barbarian.

WITH the conversion of Constantine Christianity became the State religion. That does not mean that the State became a religious State. All that can be claimed is that influences which were Christian had a freer course. It did not mean that Constantine became a Christian as we understand the term, for his motives were mixed, and were as much political as personal. Wherever there is that, or any other admixture of interest, there is always a dilution of experience, and a lack of power. The true allegiance to Jesus is one of full surrender, and must be personal, free from reservations, and containing none of the alloy of self-interest. It is not to be supposed, however, that where the acknowledgment of Jesus is reserved, no good accrues. History teems with proof to the contrary. At the same time the knowledge that it exists checks a too exuberant expectation of what those results should be. The embracing of Christianity by Constantine made a profound difference to the history of mankind,

but we need to make a wide survey before it is fully seen, and to be prepared for the exercise of a great patience.

It is important, too, to remember that the conversion of a monarch, and the consequent recognition of Christianity as a State religion, does not guarantee the conversion of his people. It may modify a hostile attitude, and it may incline some to a new interest ; but as with King, so with people, allegiance to Jesus must be a personal confession arising from a personal desire for salvation. No one man, however exalted, by any act, however imperial or imperious, can change the heart of another man. That act is as individual as salvation. The emperor may stop a persecution but he cannot prevent an opponent from wishing to persecute. He may prohibit an evil thing in his dominions, but he cannot exterminate the desire to do an evil thing. That is as far beyond his power as the control of the sun or the tides. When it is said that Christianity triumphed with the conversion of Constantine it is true, but it is true within certain severe limitations. It did not mean, and it could not mean, that from Constantine down to the most servile slave in his dominions every man became a personal lover of the Lord Jesus Christ, and followed Him with humble and loyal devotion. What it did mean was that the leaven which had worked through keen and bitter persecution had won recognition. But think of the lump that had to be leavened !

The Roman Empire was breaking up. The fall of Rome under Alaric the Goth in 410 A.D., was but

the climax of centuries of decay. Until the conversion of Constantine, Christian activity had been mainly ameliorative, and could exert little influence on policy. At first the Christians had to fight for their lives. Later, when they were tolerated, the little communities strengthened themselves, cultivated their spiritual gifts, and sought in every way to extend their power. It is urged by some that they failed to seize their opportunity because they did not save the Empire, but to urge that is to forget human nature and its reactions, and to expect the impossible. The establishment of a really vitalizing contact with so vast an organization as an Empire required time—more time than was allowed. A world was crashing, not a political machine—a world of thought, and practice, as well as machinery, and corrupted to the centre. What was needed was not an under-pinning to keep a creaking fabric from collapse, but a radical restorative changing the texture of its parts. If there had been time to clamp it together until the greater work could have been attempted, that might have been achieved—but there was not time. The barbarians were out for conquest, and the fate of the Empire was sealed.

But the "cells" still lived. It is not enough to condemn them because they had not achieved the impossible, or to blame them for not having done more than they did. That is to be captious and uncritical. It is to forget how Christianity works. It is to ignore the fundamental responsibility of the human soul. The more fruitful line of

inquiry would be to ask what would have happened if those "cells" had not been there, and living? What would have happened to the Western world if the Byzantine Empire had not been a buffer against Mohammedanism long enough to give the Western world time to establish itself on a more or less Christian basis? What kind of a Western world would it have been if the barbarian races had remained barbarian? It is easy to be insolently critical of the feebleness of much of what the Christians did, or failed to do, as Gibbon is inclined to be, but the question still remains: What would the modern world have been like if those "cells" had not been there, and living? The story of the centuries from the fall of Rome to the Reformation is heavy with many deep and tragic shadows, but it is lit by many gleams of light. In touching it here and there we shall feel the chill of the gloom, but we shall not be unconscious of the glow. We shall feel that the truth about God, and man, and man's relationships, is never lost sight of. We shall see the truth perverted and tortured by compromise and accommodation, but it remained the truth, and the only truth of life. It was the leaven at work in a lump ruined by corruption and decay, and ridden by barbarism. The miracle is that it survived and triumphed as it did.

The Byzantine Empire—A Buffer State.

There is general agreement that the Byzantine Empire, founded by Constantine, presented a type of civilization about which little that is good can

be said. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, declares that the Empire was pre-eminently the age of treachery. It possessed the externals of an advanced civilization but they were only external. It was cruel and sensual; with tastes that rarely rose above intrigue and deceit: and full of futile disputation, which rivalled chariot races as a recreation and amusement. Nor did this corruption end with the non-Christian classes. The love-feasts of the Christians became drunken riots. Great festivals held to commemorate the martyrs degenerated into scandalous dissipations. The clergy shared in the general looseness. The church, the monasteries, and even the practising of desert asceticism, were embraced by multitudes seeking escape from work, or civic or military duties. The Church was marked by a luxuriant extravagance that sought to outshine the splendour of Rome, and this lavish extravagance was imitated everywhere. A grotesque pomp, eaten through with falsity and treachery, shouldered vice that fretted like a canker into the heart of the race, which a superstitious belief in absolution could condone but not cure.

It is not to be thought, however, that these abuses ran unchecked. The Fathers denounced the degradation of the Love-feasts; the Council of Laodicea condemned them in the 4th century, and they were suppressed at the end of the 7th century by the Council of Trullo. In order to curb the abuses among the clergy, Valentine deprived priests and monks of the privilege of receiving

legacies, and Jerome complained of the excessive splendour of episcopal banquets. Boniface appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury imploring him to restrain or regulate the pilgrimages of his countrywomen, because of the moral danger which accompanied them. And this was a civilization which had been founded in a new city, far removed, it was thought, from the taints of the old barbarism, and which derived its ethics from Christian sources! Where is there in it anything that speaks of reform, of purity, of a faith in God, and man, and man's destiny, such as we look for in a true union with Jesus? The first glance suggests absolute failure: a closer examination reveals that it was far from being that. Before we can reach that conclusion we must form an estimate of the character of the people themselves, and compare their standard with that of other races not yet influenced by the same leaven. After all the Byzantine Empire was only a part of the "lump." And it cannot be forgotten that it kept alive, and nourished, many things of vital value.

Dean Church, in *The Gifts of Civilization*, takes the Greek race as typical of the peoples who formed the Eastern Church. He claims that they have a special interest for us because it was the Greek, and those imbued with Greek ideas, who first welcomed Christianity, and gave it the language through which it was first spoken to the world. Its first homes were in Greek households, and in Greek cities, and it won its first victories over Greek minds and hearts. In the early days great men

were associated with its faith—Justin and Origen, Gregory and Chrysostom, Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem, and John of Damascus. This was the race—clever, volatile, untrustworthy, the victim of the last new thing—which the Romans had conquered when morally, socially and politically it was headed for bankruptcy. The Greeks had a great heritage but they had frittered away their manhood, and the Romans, who admired their gifts, had nothing but contempt for the lack of use they made of them. Their character is portrayed in the Epistles of Paul, as well as by the heathen satirist Lucian, and affords a sorry study.

This was the race, together with other races of which it is typical, which was called upon to suffer one of the greatest upheavals in the history of mankind. Theirs was to be the fate of first being disrupted by the northern barbarians, and later assaulted by his like from the Arabian wilderness and the Tartar steppes. They had to withstand the surge of a fierce Mohammedanism, and submit to century after century of misgovernment and misfortune, finally to go down under the Ottoman tide. And yet they did not perish, nor did they lose their sense of nationality or destiny. As a race it was grievously beset from without and within, and of a texture not calculated to resist the enemies that sought its destruction—and yet it persisted. Its type might not command respect, its creed appear crude and imperfect, its tone a low one—but the fact remains that it lived through an era which would have shattered many a stronger

race, and it lived because of its faith. It is no mean tribute to the power of a faith that it could achieve such a result. And it was Greek Christianity which kept the Byzantine Empire on its feet for five hundred years after Rome had fallen.

And this persistence, despite all that has been written about the vileness of the civilization which the Empire exhibited, was not fruitless. There were great figures in it—and Christianity works upon society through individuals—and there were great movements because of their influence. New ideals of character were set up, which, while they did not lift the general character to a high level, compelled thought, won a new respect for moral greatness, and altered permanently the current thinking about the end and value of human life. The spirit of equality and fraternity, essentially a Greek idea of society, was strengthened by the Christian conception of fellowship and unity in Jesus, until it became an ineradicable trait in the nation's character. And it was Christianity that gave the Greeks hope. A race dogged by misfortune, cursed by debasing vices, broken by centuries of evil government and evil living, dared to believe that it had a place in the life of the world, and to hope that it would justify it. Philosophy could never have given it that hope. It needed a religion.

Robert Burns reminds us that it is easier to add up the sum of a man's misdeeds than to know what he has resisted, and it would be grossly unfair to this much-berated civilization if we did not give credit where credit was due. The gladiatorial

games were never introduced into Constantinople. The great schools of vice which had grown up under the names of the temples of Venus were suppressed, and under the influence of Christianity the gross effrontery of vice in its representations and indulgences disappeared. The race was not purged, but it was controlled and awed. The best men were drawn to strengthen the case for virtue, and the worst were checked by the fear of punishment, and the strength of a public opinion which the pulpit was steadily increasing. Many men were lost to the cause of purity and righteousness by the extravagant form which asceticism took. When the tide of asceticism was at the flood, thousands fled into the deserts, there by a life of maceration and sacrifice to achieve absolute purity, and their flight weakened the active forces at work cleansing the Augean stables of their filth. These ascetics emphasized an active principle of the Christian faith, but they violated another, although their example was not without effect. It was a protest against a grossness from which they had revolted, but it was a withdrawal of what was needed for its correction, and like all unnatural excesses it induced its own penalties.

When the worst has been said about this Empire—and the worst is very bad, and has been enlarged upon by many writers—how does its conduct compare with what was taking place in other parts of the world? Dr. Finlay, in his *History of the Byzantine Empire*, claims that the moral conditions of the Empire were superior to any previously

known among an equal number of people. He declares that when early in the 8th century Leo III reorganized the frame of society which made all equal in the eye of the law, the first step was taken toward the construction of modern society, and a new social era opened for mankind. Many influences worked for this, but the greatest was that of Christianity and the Church. The power of the clergy tempered the severity of arbitrary rule, and the teachings of Jesus infused a spirit of justice and freedom into the popular mind. At the time when the West was in the throes of social anarchy, overthrowing one government after another, and eaten into by drunkenness and immorality, the East was being preserved by a superior moral tone, the product of Christianity.

Dean Church is no less emphatic. At the time when Western civilization was sinking "the Greek Empire, with all its evils and weaknesses, was yet in its time the only existing image in the world of a civilized state. It had arts, it had learning, it had military science and power; it was, for its day, the one refuge for peaceful industry. It had a place which we could ill afford to miss in the history of the world." Even Gibbon, never the friend of anything Byzantine, paints a picture of its life in the 10th century, which by contrast with the hopeless darkness of the West is positively dazzling. He speaks of the splendours of the Court and the Capital, of the prosperity of the provinces, of the sagacity and good sense of its rulers and the spacious character of its laws, of

the skill and value of its manufactures, and its generous catholicity. "Even the barbarians," he writes, "who had seated themselves in arms in the territory of the Empire were gradually reclaimed to the laws of the Church and State." Failure as it was at the end, it kept alive traditions of learning, law, national unity, social order, and industry, and arrested the mounting strength of the Asiatic until the leaven had had time to begin its work in the West.

Constantinople fell to the Crescent as Rome had fallen to the barbarian. We are told that Rome fell because it proved faithless to the ideals which at one time it had upheld. So it was with the Byzantine Empire. Its love of wealth, its sycophancy, its neglect of great popular causes involving equity and civil liberty, lost it its grip and its power. It made some measure of atonement during the centuries that followed for it preserved the Greek race. At its best it gave evidence of what Jesus can do in the development of the social organization of a race, and of a race with so inauspicious a moral heritage, and of so mercurial a nature. A little more of personal loyalty to Jesus, and a little less of disputation about meaningless differences; a little more of sustained service in the interests of the masses, and a little less of desert fanaticism; a little more of chastity of spirit, and a little less of magnificence of ceremony, great as were their psalms and their liturgies; and how different it might have been! It was a tremendous experiment in the life of man, and it

held the stage for a thousand years. It proved that one of the least dependable races that ever lived in the limelight of recorded history could have been made great in its sense of God, in its relationships with men, and in its philosophy of man, if only it had followed the Redeemer as His call demands.

The Barbarian Field—A Stubborn Glebe.

When we turn to examine the Western world with which we have now most to do, we find a striking contrast in every way. The Greeks and Latins had for centuries lived under a civilization of a high order, and Christianity came to them when that order was breaking down. It had to deal with them in their disasters and defeat, tortured in mind and body by their failures and their vices. Augustine, in the 5th century, in his *City of God*, meets the charge of the pagans that the fall of Rome was brought about by the abandoning of the old gods, under whose guidance the Empire had grown world-wide. His reply is not only a sharp denial, but an assertion that the cause lies in the viciousness of paganism itself, and proclaims that the practice of Christianity would save the State. He writes of a City of God, here on earth, in the spiritual life of true believers—the Church. Salvien, in the same century, in his *Government of God*, rails at the Christians for their faithlessness, and too frequent yielding to the pagan habits. The task is one of explanation, of comforting, of restoration, and the fixing of the faith. The first

period of Christianity which was the period of morals, had passed into the period of orthodoxy, which reached its height about this time.

The impact on the barbarian was a very different thing. The Teutonic races were in the very infancy of civilization, and Christianity became the spring and fountain of their growth. They were conquerors, carrying everything before them, flushed with success, mounting from height to height of intoxicating triumph. Christianity had not to console them, or attempt to explain to them the miseries of the world, but to tame them, train them, teach them humility and obedience, turn their strength into great channels, and to guide their instincts into wise exercises. For them the Church was schoolmaster rather than father confessor, and its task was to legislate and discipline. To the Greek it had been the bringer of a new stability which preserved it as a race; to the Latin it gave delicacy and tenderness in place of its ancient coldness and hardness: to the barbarian it was to give the foundations of a new social order, and an environment in which this could grow.

How much they needed this new influence is seen by a glance at what they were like during the century of their greatest activity as the destroyers of a civilization they were to replace. The information is scanty, but both Cæsar and Tacitus regarded the Germans as distinct and different from the Gauls. They spoke of them as big men, with fierce blue eyes and red hair. Their favourite

occupations were plundering, warfare, and hunting; and their chief diversions were loafing, carousing, and gambling. The care of house, fields, and cattle, was left to the women, old men, others who could not fight, and slaves. Houses were rude, and in winter caves were dug under the ground for warmth. Clothing was simple, and made largely of skins. Food consisted mainly of milk, cheese, and flesh, including horse-flesh. The cultivation of the land was meagre, and they had no cities, and little of commerce or industry. They had little art, but a passionate love of the sea. Both Cæsar and Tacitus agree that they were thoughtful, and describe them as discussing matters both private and public at their drunken feasts—"Because they think that at no time is the mind more open to fair judgment, or more inflamed to mighty deeds." That explanation is not accepted as complete, as later literature would suggest that they were too shrewd, and sceptical, and of far too moralizing a turn of mind for that.

Not much is known of their religious beliefs and practices. Cæsar speaks of them as worshipping the forces of nature, and it is also said that they worshipped their ancestors. For an uncivilized people they gave women a high place. Monogamy was the custom, and vice did not hold the place it did in the Empire. The slave class was made up of captives taken in war, debtors, gamblers, and those who had sold themselves to ensure food and shelter. The father of a family could sell wife or child if he were in dire need. The slave

was the chattel of his master who had the power of life and death over him, but Tacitus speaks of his condition as being more like that of a serf than a slave. The tribes governed themselves by councils of free men, and discussions were mainly concerned with the maintaining of old customs. The agenda of business was formulated by a council of chiefs. There was no police force, but public opinion was strong enough to preserve the customs, as violation meant outlawry, which made a man a wanderer on the face of the earth.

This description may be taken as typical of the northern barbarians who swept down like the full tides of the sea to the utter ruin of an ancient order. They came under many names, and from a vast region of forests and morasses, first to overrun, and then to revivify the conquered nations. They were possessed of a savage energy, and of an equally savage indolence ; but they were to be the fathers of a greater world than history had yet known. They were to explore the world and colonize it. They were to provide great soldiers and sailors, great craftsmen and statesmen, great kings and scholars, great temples of justice and great forces of individual and national righteousness. At the beginning they were like rich, virgin soil, but hard and stubborn, difficult of drainage and tillage ; for they were as rebellious of control as they were of spirit—but the granite-like glebe was broken up, and the work of cultivation begun. If methods were crude, men were rough, and the artificers had to use such implements as they

possessed, and as experience advised. We are not looking at perfection in either teacher or taught. We are looking at a breaking, heaving world, controlled by a vast elementary energy, which in turn came to be dominated by the spirit of Jesus.

It would be worse than folly to think that the change was wrought either easily or speedily, or that the process was not marred by many reactions. We know how difficult it is to infect a highly civilized race with the germ of a great ideal, and how slowly the stubborn will of man is broken to bear the yoke of elementary justice. This task was the changing of a rude and savage nature into one responsive to a thousand strange refinements, and for that a thousand years is none too great a space of time. And there was nothing else to employ for the working of this real miracle of change but the teaching of Jesus. It is fatuous to complain that that teaching was often faulty, clothed upon by many hindering accretions, clogged by many barbarian interpretations, fettered by what seems to us blundering and ridiculous restraints. We cannot be fair to the men who kept the light burning, and bit by bit purified its flame from its corruptions, unless we try to think ourselves back into their time, and the atmosphere in which they lived. Then, despite the laggards and the perverts, the disputators and the ceremonialists, those who sought to serve an institution rather than an ideal, and those who sought their own interests rather than their Master's Kingdom, we shall reverence the torch bearers, and hail them as the advance

guard of those who were to make His Kingdom take root in the hearts and institutions of men.

The Blazers of the Trail.

Apart from the Goths the first glimmerings of the light came to the barbarians in the lands they had conquered. The Goths had been missioned by Ulfilas, who had translated part of the Old Testament, and most of the New Testament, into the vernacular, and these translations are the earliest examples of the Germanic language that we know. It is said that Ulfilas refrained from translating the Books of Samuel and Kings on the ground that the Goths were too fond of fighting as it was. The northern tribes had had no such preparation. They came to waste and to destroy, and found something which they were powerless to destroy. They could overthrow a civilization, and lay waste the plenty of the fields, but there was another force to be reckoned with, new in its experience, and irresistible in its authority, which prevented them from carrying their barbarous designs to the uttermost execution, and compelled them to witness the administration of a charity unparalleled in its benevolence.

How tribes and nations which came under this new force were converted we do not fully know. What we know with certainty is that the priests they met were far more civilized than the priests they had left behind; that their ceremonies were imposing and attractive; that they claimed a power over the future of souls that was terrifying;

and that, knowing how the tribe followed the chief or king in his religion, they set themselves to capture the head. One of the most effective ways of doing that was to convert the queens. It is related of Clotilda that she attracted her husband to the Church by the richness of the ceremonies. The belief that temporal success followed Christianity made a powerful appeal, and that was supported by the assertion that pestilence and disaster followed idolatry. The conversion of the king was followed by that of the tribe, or race, and in this way the conquerors who had ravaged an Empire, fell to the spear of the Church, and the victory of Christianity over the barbarian world had begun.

This wholesale conversion of races and tribes meant very little at first. It was but as a dew settling on a rock, but it was the promise of a later rain that should split the rock, make it friable, prepare it as soil for the living seed of the word, and it held within its gentle prophecy the hope of harvest. The task of Christianizing the barbarians was a stupendous one—so vast in its magnitude that no mind could compass it. And yet it was attempted. The rocks were split, the soil was made, the seed was sown, and in due time the blade appeared which heralded the full corn in the ear. When the dust of the century of cataclysmic changes had settled, the foundations of a new society in England, Normandy, and France were being laid. New political organizations began to take shape. They were crude, still shot through with savagery, and sometimes submerged by it, but the new idea

was never slain. Here it succeeded and failed, and there it failed to succeed again. There was the clash of the old and the new; the drag of the under-tow, and the pull of the new forces; the spell of the ancient tradition and the lure of the gleam that led to freedom. And, ever at work, with a devotion beyond all praise, with a consummate strategy of attack and a conservation of what had been won, were those whose knowledge of God, and whose faith in man, through the teaching of the great Reformer, made them the torch-bearers at the birth of a new world.

In a striking and unforgettable passage, Guizot says: "In the new era, the first thing we meet with is the religious society; it was the most advanced, the strongest: whether in the Roman municipality or by the side of the barbarian kings, or in the ranks of the conquerors who have become lords of the land, everywhere we observe the presence and the influence of the church. From the 4th to the 13th century it is the Church which always marches in the front rank of civilization. I must call your attention to a fact which stands at the head of all others and characterizes the Christian Church in general—a fact which, so to speak, has decided its destiny. This fact is the unity of the Church, the unity of the Christian society, irrespective of all diversities of time, of place, of power, of language, or origin. Wonderful phenomenon! It is just at the moment when the Roman Empire is breaking up and disappearing that the Christian Church gathers itself up and

takes its definitive form. Political humanity perishes; religious humanity emerges. Populations endlessly different in origin, habits, speech, destiny, rush upon the scene; all becomes local and partial; every enlarged idea, every general institution, every great arrangement is lost sight of; and in this moment the Christian Church proclaims most loudly the unity of its teaching, the universality of its law. And from the bosom of the most frightful disaster the world has ever seen has arisen the largest and purest idea, perhaps, which ever drew men together—the idea of a spiritual society."

It was this idea of a spiritual society—a society in which there was no class, or caste, or race; of which every member was a servant of God, and therefore a servant of his fellows; to belong to which called for a personal holiness of life, and a goodwill toward men; the distinguishing mark of which was to be a follower of Jesus—that was at work. It began to reconcile the conflicting, and to accommodate the stubborn; to reconstruct what had been broken and to inform it with new motives; and to elaborate in the character of the nations unsuspected powers of elasticity and growth. It operated through kings, and nobles, and the chiefs among men, and it was the outcome of the work of the followers of the Reformer.

Of the monasteries from which these missionaries came it would be easy to write with disparagement. It is true that they were not enthusiastic in favour of secular knowledge; that apart from the great works of Thomas Aquinas and the Benedictines,

they produced no great theological literature ; that in the course of time they became corrupt in many ways, and the love of truth declined ; that they elaborated horrible doctrines of torment in hell for the purpose of extracting money ; that they fostered the spirit of terrorism to increase their hold upon a credulous and superstitious age ; but that is not the whole truth.

In a time of utter demoralization they offered a refuge to the hunted, the fearful, and the studious. By their industry they gave a new dignity to labour, and by their insistence on humility and obedience they introduced a new tone into the temper of the age. They tilled the waste, reclaimed the marshes, felled great forests, became centres of industry and civilization, and set a model the influence of which was beyond measure. If they created little that was great in a literature of their own, they preserved what was great in the literature of the world. If after the first enthusiasm had died down they sought to hamper thought by the restrictions of a hard and unsympathetic creed, they ever sought to create a moral order which in the end must enlarge the creed. They liberated a power which was as much beyond their control as the rising of the sun. They insisted on the cessation of all work on the Christian Sunday, and even at the time when the life of the monastery was most degraded, the active benevolence of charity was never restricted. Slaves were purchased and released, and the oppressed were protected. Saint Germanus a Bishop of Paris near the end of the

6th century, was especially famous for his zeal in ransoming captives. The monasteries outlived their day, but they created the day which made them superfluous. And the greatest engine which was to be the means of their undoing was forged within their own walls—the missionary.

At first the flow of these torch-bearers came from the East to the West, as when Gregory sent Augustine to England, but the time came when the flow was from the West. The monks of Lindisfarne missioned the north of England. Columbanus became famous in Gaul, Germany, and Italy. St. Gall attacked and converted a part of Switzerland. Boniface spread Christianity far and wide throughout Germany, and exerted a powerful influence of the highest type. During three centuries of a degradation in Europe which was extreme, and which affected morals, polities, and thought alike, the stream of missionaries poured forth from the monasteries bearing the saving truth, which gave birth to a new civilization stretching from the plains of Lombardy to the North Sea.

There was something sublime about the supreme audacity of these men. They went defenceless and unarmed through tribes which had overrun and overthrown a world. They confronted conquerors and kings with a power of the spirit that was more kingly than any they had ever known, and before which they bowed as conquered. They opposed their idea of Empire with the idea of the Kingdom of heaven, and the rules by which they governed life were the rules of a society of men bound together

by a spirit of service and goodwill. They taught of a God who was a Father, of a Son of God who was a Saviour, of man who was a child of God, and of a relationship between men that called for compassion and help. They knew no fear, and allowed of no lowering of the throne before which they worshipped. They delivered a message which was a challenge and a command, such as the tribes who, later, becoming welded into the kingdoms of Greece and Rome, had never heard. It was addressed to a race of men quick to seize upon and adapt a new idea, while yet tenacious of what they considered good in the old: a race whose energy had not been sapped by vice, and whose purposes triumphed again and again over the corruptions and catastrophies through which they passed; a race which offered a seed-plot of such rugged strength and vitality that it yielded a harvest unexampled in its variety, and still more wonderful in its promise of what it will yet yield.

It is true that the light burned more brightly in some places than in others. The monasteries in England not only led to the conversion of the Angles, and Saxons, and Jutes, but were the chief centres of civilization, and preserved in the 7th and 8th centuries a higher culture than could be found in most Western lands. Bede wrote an ecclesiastical history, commentaries on the Bible, treatises on grammar, and made essays in natural science. He tells of Cædmon who composed paraphrases of Biblical story in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. So noted were English monasteries for their learning

that when Charlemagne wanted eight hundred scholars at his Frankish Court, he looked to England for them. It was from an English monastery that Boniface went in the 8th century on his reforming and rebuilding work through Frisia, Thuringia, Hesse, and Bavaria, by which surviving heathen customs were abolished, the morals of the priests improved, and the organization of the Church systematized. Irish culture was equally notable. It was to the Irish Church, and Columban especially, that the *Penitentials*—books giving lists of sins and their punishments or penances—were due. In our time such books arouse a smile, but that was a barbarous age, and the State was weak to punish crime and keep order. What the State failed to do the priests did, and the *Penitentials* were an education in the essentials of morals and decency.

It would be a mistake to conclude that the work of the monastery and the priest was confined to the tabulations of sins, and the impositions of punishments. In the fullest sense of the word the priests were nation builders, and their hands were upon the consciences of chiefs and kings. Some of the rulers were crude in their conceptions of statecraft, and many of their ethics were in urgent need of revision. Most of them show a wide difference between their private lives and their theories of the State, but they placed the Christian stamp upon the slowly evolving order. If their plans of social reform were halting, plans were made, their execution attempted and often carried out, and the unfailing

inspiration behind them was the Christian Church. Gregory, after he became Pope, tried to feed the poor, to ransom captives, and to allay the ravages of plague. As the landlord of Church estates in Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Gaul, and Africa, he insisted on justice being done to every man; that none were to be oppressed; and that the poor and the unfortunate were to be dealt with mercifully. He counselled imperial officers, and the Emperor himself, on matters of State, and he set a standard for his bishops throughout the world.

The Primitive Ploughshares.

An outstanding illustration of the influence the Church had upon the shaping of national affairs, and of the kind of character through which it had to work, is seen in the reign of Charlemagne. Charles the Great was a giant in stature, a great trencherman though temperate in his drinking, not personally pure, and a great warrior. He was at war somewhere in nearly every year of his reign, ever increasing his territory, and governing with a strong hand. He was ambitious, autocratic, and could be brutal; yet he was a zealous promoter of Christianity and learning. He made many new laws, but important action was rarely taken by him without consultation with the nobles and the higher clergy. The tendency of his laws was to soften what had been harsh, and to substitute something fairer and more civilized. He depended much upon his bishops for the making of his laws to run, and he sought to keep his officials efficient

throughout his territories by sending itinerants to visit them, one of whom was a clergyman. One of his favourite books was Augustine's *City of God*, and he aimed to make his Empire a State of which God would approve, and in which God's will should rule.

Charles showed his independence by regarding himself, and not the Pope, as the supreme instrument of the Divine will, and that it was his business to issue orders to Church and State, and to see that they were carried out. The Pope's business was to pray for their success, and to act as the Emperor instructed. Charles made no effort to preserve his own life blameless, but when he heard of scandalous behaviour in the monasteries, he said: "Certainly if any such report shall have come to our ears in the future we will inflict such a penalty, not only on the culprits, but also on those who have consented to such deeds, that no Christian who shall have heard of it will ever dare in the future to perpetrate such acts." An imperfect instrument as will be admitted, and one which failed in many ways, but the light shone on him and through him, and he was one of the agents of the transition not to be despised. His great influence pervaded the religious, political, and intellectual modes of one of the darkest periods of European history. He founded schools and libraries; reformed the coinage; extended commerce; convoked great legislative assemblies; and became the hero of the imagination of Europe. In the East it was the ascetic who had held the admiration of the world: in the West it was to be the knight and chivalry.

It has often been urged against the Church that whilst in the beginning it was a pacific influence it became, later, not only the champion of war, but the occasion of many wars. That is but a half-truth which needs to be amplified. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, and Basil, all declared that all warfare was unlawful for those who had been converted. Origen maintained that the prayers of the Christians were more efficacious than the swords of the legions. Augustine, however, condemned soldiers who through religious motives deserted their colours, although the calling was discouraged. But the growing belief that prosperity followed orthodoxy and virtue made a successful battle appear a providential interposition; and as they were turbulent times, and force was dominant, the stigma which Christianity had attached to war gradually disappeared. The influence of the Church remained on the side of peace, and it was not until the terrors created by the threats of Mohammedanism, and the example it set, that the pacifism of the early Church was changed into the military Christianity of the Crusades.

The military spirit was everywhere, and the conditions of life encouraged it. At the same time if the Church failed to prohibit war, and often provoked it, it influenced the conduct of war in an increasingly remarkable degree. It prevented many private wars. It instituted "Truces of God." It discouraged the practice of enslaving prisoners, and ransomed immense multitudes of those who

had been enslaved. In the Crusades it created a new ideal altogether. It was a compromise, and like all compromises its success was partial, but it attempted to unify the two great contending urges of the time—the desire to fight with the desire to be a Christian. The tendency was toward peace, and the ideal was never wholly forgotten.

A very simple exercise of the critical faculty would find a thousand flaws in these men and their policies, but it would be unjust and unphilosophical to judge them by our standards—standards made possible by what they did. They made a beginning which made improvement not only desirable but inevitable, and which guaranteed it. But for such men, and such policies, the barbarian invasion would have meant the spread and perpetuation of a hopeless and fatal barbarism. The world was saved from that because there were individuals who had seen God, man, and relations, through Jesus, and who sought with varying success to bring others to see and feel as they did. A thousand impalpable influences affected the response, weakening and diluting it—sometimes for a time suppressing it altogether. But despite difficulties beyond our conceiving this new spirit wrought out material reform—in what it did for the slave, the captive, and the poor; war, labour, and law; schools, culture, and the arts of peace. Such results can be tabulated, but great as they were they were not the greatest. A new social unity was being created, animated by a new tone and temper, the value of which is not so easily gauged, but which must be recognized,

As Dean Church points out we see in it the first tendency toward the making of a national character, which has been the cradle of the greatest movement of mankind toward a higher ideal than ever reached before.

There are enormous differences in behaviour, as in the creeds current among races of the Germanic stock, but there are certain qualities which are held in honour by all. Dean Church specifies them. He instances Truth, and the group of virtues which go with Truth—manliness, law, and purity. The love of the real and the hatred of sham; the love of the simple and the straightforward, and the disgust at hypocrisy and the flamboyant; the sense of justice, and the desire to see fair play; independence, self-confidence, and moral courage; the willingness to secure order and peaceful progress. There was also the willingness to submit private interests to the control of public authority, and the insistence that purity is the only allowable standard of life, however much below it men might fall. The rudiments of these virtues were in the stock, but it was Christianity that cultured, disciplined, and consolidated them. The servants of Jesus who moved amongst the people, taught them, gave them new ideas of industry, peaceable cultivation, and what was best, most manly and worthy in man. Out of it there grew a new sense of humanity, a new control, a new obedience, and a new conception of home—a sanctuary for man, marked by piety, purity, and affection.

We have but glanced at what was happening in

a thousand years, but what fruitful years they were! They saw the ruin of something that was magnificent, but inadequate for the needs of mankind, and they saw the threat of a retreat into a condition of appalling waste. But they saw, too, the lifting up of One who came to be the Light of the World—the Teacher who taught men about themselves, and their relationship to God, and to one another. The torch-bearers were imperfect men, with imperfect understanding of the light, and an imperfect expression of what they thought it meant: but in spite of error and mistake, in spite of faulty living and faulty doctrine, in spite of reactions and recreancies, the light shone out. The hearts of men were softened, the habits of men were changed, the ideals of nations were slowly transformed. The policies of Governments became more peaceful, and the rights and duties of men more clearly worked out. It was hardly more than the breaking of the rock into soil out of which would grow a rich harvest, but that in itself was an achievement of majestic grandeur. And now we shall see that the same spirit, springing from the heart of the same teaching, began to work even more mightily for the amelioration of the lot of man.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Light in the Dark Ages.

IT is customary for us to think of the Middle Ages as being barren of all good. We look at them through the light of the Reformation, and we see a background that is almost ghoul-like in its repulsiveness. That is largely because we measure them at the end by the spectacle presented by the Church, and the impression is not unwarranted. It had failed to maintain its right to be regarded as a spiritual society because it had grown to be so worldly that the glow of its spirituality was almost obscured. Its greed had become rapacious, reaching out to the ends of the earth in its levying of toll; and greed's twin sister, corruption, had poisoned the whole structure with its venom. Nor was this all—nor can it ever be all where such tragic ills fester in the body of any estate—the Church had become as tyrannous as it was greedy and corrupt. Reform was inevitable. When it came it broke up the unity of the Church, and brought to an end a control which in the beginning had saved civilization, done much to shape it, and upon which in many remarkable ways it had placed the Christian stamp.

It is proper to emphasize and condemn the vices which had grown rank, and which stank to heaven. It is legitimate to rejoice over the cleansing that came, and to exalt the intrepid heroes of the spiritual renaissance. It serves a useful purpose to magnify what they did in the interests of freedom, and in the creation of a new sense of individual responsibility. At the same time mankind owes a debt to those ages which is scurvily repudiated if we dismiss them as wholly dark, or wholly corrupt, or wholly sterile of reform. There were men who lived then who laid the foundations of ethical thinking about economic and social reforms which have not yet been fully worked out. They were men who sought to apply the teaching of Jesus to human relationship in a way never attempted before, and in a way which we realize is the only way. If their work was different they shone as brilliantly in their day as any Luther or Wesley, and if their results were on another plane they are just as imperishable. They were under the spell of the same Master, and they served Him, as the development of the time required, with as devoted a zeal and with as sacrificing a loyalty.

A Primary Need—Law.

One of the primary needs of a settled and developing civilization is law. Unless there be a recognized order, accepted and imposed, nothing can grow or abide. This is something very different from the authority wielded by a conqueror or a despot, who, being in possession, exercises an arbitrary power, disobedience to which brings

punishment. Despotism may produce order, but that is contingent upon the despot. Law, which is to be of any value, involves a consciousness of unity; of a necessity for regulations by which that unity can be preserved; and the adoption of such regulations by common consent. Where such laws exist they express the thought, the ideals, the character of the people who make them, and consent to be governed by them.

With the break-up of Charlemagne's Kingdom the necessity for law became urgent, and the centuries that followed are notable for the body and character of the laws which became operative, and the way in which these were shaped and given their character by the Christian Church. There was no great overlord, striding Cæsar-like across half a world, but there were great followers of Jesus, whose views of man and his relations were based on His teaching, and illumined by His spirit. Now that men were settling down in their Kingdoms to live in peace, it was their function to teach them how to live.

It is not to be inferred from this that law was non-existent. Much of Roman law had survived the many upheavals, but it had suffered so many changes as to be barely recognizable. There was in addition a body of Church law—born of councils, popes, and bishops; some genuine, some forged; sometimes antagonistic to civil law but more often akin, and occasionally entirely new. Civil law in England was further broken by the division within the Kingdom itself. There were the laws of Kent, of Mercia, and of Northumbria; and the laws of

Henry, discovered by Langton at Canterbury, and which were used in formulating the demands of the Great Charter. This unusual development in England was due to the fact that England had become a distinct nation before any other European country. It was one of the first provinces to be abandoned by the Romans. It had never been a part of Charlemagne's Empire. When that Empire dissolved England began to unite within itself, and the tendency was strengthened by William the Conqueror and his sons. They, and their followers, became absorbed in the mass, and the language changed into something like our modern English, although the old legal institutions and ancient customs of Edward the Confessor were still observed.

Civil and Church law in the West was thus confused and contradictory, and made further confusing by feudalism, which opposed all in turn. The 13th century was faced with the task of bringing some kind of order out of chaos. How well those who essayed the task succeeded may be gathered from the judgment of Professor Ashley, who, in the second part of his first volume on *Economic History*, says: "The later years of the 15th century were marked by the appearance for the first time in literature of a complete and systematic doctrine—a body of teaching with interconnected parts, and touching every side of the economic life of the time. This doctrine was that of the Canon Law."

A study of this Canon Law is the only evidence needed to prove that, whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Church, there were great

Christians who sought to translate their Master's teaching into the practice of their time. How greatly they succeeded is a matter of history; and if the Middle Ages had left us nothing else but this monument to Christian genius they would have left us a priceless heritage.

It is not quite clear how far Canon Law influenced civil law and legislation in England, as the work done has been too meagre to warrant certainty. The inferences point to an influence similar to that which operated on the Continent. It is known—despite the many changes which were taking place in this country—that English art, culture, and ecclesiastical usage, were affected by the Continent. The men who went to the Schools to learn law would be compelled to study the great compilations of the civilians and the Canonists, as these were the only law there was. It matters little whether the judges styled themselves Canonists or civilians. The probability is that the governing classes of England held the same economic views as ran elsewhere, and as many of the statesmen were Canonists, and most of the officials would have studied civil and canon law, legislation, as well as the practice of the courts, must have been affected. There is strong evidence that this must have been the case in the Statute of Labourers (1349) where it is enacted that in determining the prices of victuals, regard must be paid to prices ruling in neighbouring markets, and the cost of transport. Canon Law could hardly have been otherwise than national, as it was an integral part of the Church's moral teaching

from the pulpit and through the confessional. The principles of the Canon Law dealing with reasonable prices, and usury, are found in many of the English town ordinances, and give clear evidence how persistent and widespread this teaching must have been.

The Canonists and Law.

What the Canonists sought to do was to take hold of that part of Christian ethics which dealt with the principles of right and wrong in the economic sphere, and apply them to specific actions. The principles had been settled in early centuries, and their particular application was now called for by changing conditions due to the expansion of trade, and new business methods. How important the work was considered to be may be judged from the fact that it was discussed in many theological treatises, and in the large number of manuals prepared for the use of the confessional, and handbooks on Canon Law for the use of ecclesiastical lawyers. In addition to these there were many special treatises dealing with contracts, exchange, money, and usury. At the Council of Vienna in 1311 the Western Church refused to recognize all secular legislation in favour of usury. Prohibition of usury—which was an attempt to save the weak from the rapacity of the strong—became the central point of Canonist teaching, and in the middle of the 14th century the prohibition of usury was incorporated in the civil law.

This had important consequences. It was a blunt statement that material interests must be

subordinated to the higher ends of human development. It was a fusion of law with theology, and from that time civil lawyers recognized the prohibition of usury as of binding force. This was all the more readily done as many civil lawyers were in orders, and it was usual for all lawyers to study Canon Law with the other, and many of them became more theological than the theologians themselves.

The development of this great work occupied two centuries. It began in the 13th in an attempt to make clear the meaning of law: the end of the 15th century saw a system of conduct elaborated down to minute details, and touching innumerable points of social relationship. There was a sustained keenness in the subject which was remarkable, considering the age, and great scholastics were as concerned as great divines. The motive of both was to translate the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount into human practice. The unity of the Church made the distribution of the teaching universal. The innumerable treatises, manuals, instructions to clergy, preaching from the pulpit, and exhortations in the confessional, brought it into the life of the people. Its place within or beside the civil law made it operative.

From the 13th century onwards the Canonists and Schoolmen accepted law as right. Alexander of Hales (*d.* 1245) a great English Schoolman, regarded law as necessary because of sin—law was to keep sinners in order. Gerald de Barri (*d.* 1220) declared that: "Where there is no government the people will come to ruin." Vincent de Beauvais

wrote: "The Prince ought to urge his fellows to a love of justice, which implies, first, that they should injure no one, and secondly, that they should promote the common good." It was the development of this attitude which occupied the great Canonists. Albertus Magnus (*d.* 1280) defined it thus: "This is the proper task of the legislator—to arrange everything for the best advantage of the citizens." But the greatest Schoolman and Canonist of them all was Thomas Aquinas (*d.* 1274), who kindled a glow of enthusiasm which set aflame many minds. Dante, whose gift to literature is one of the greatest of all time, steeped his mind in the works of Aquinas, and their influence is seen in his *De Monarchia*, the subject of which is the true Christian order of society for Europe, and in the scripturally social teaching of the *Divine Comedy*. Another brilliant Schoolman, an Oxford Franciscan, William of Ockham (*d.* 1341), one of the seers who prepared the way for constitutional government, and a keen student of all social questions, was a devout student of the great Aquinas. There were many others who drank at this sparkling fountain, and their names will appear, and all of them were inspired to the championing of a detailed ethical standard of conduct. The influence of the life and teaching of Aquinas is beyond measure.

Aquinas regarded law as the measurement of the actions of man, who had rights which law must not hurt. Further, law must always be concerned with some good end. It must busy itself with the good of man—not merely protecting him from evil

but promoting his good—by enlightening the darkness of his ignorance, and training him to love his neighbour as himself. So the first principle which directs law is that which directs ethics. Aquinas believed in certain primary, fundamental, and universal principles which were immutable and indestructible. One was: "Thou shalt not steal." Another: "Do to others as you would they should do to you." There were secondary principles known only to the wise; and others of a much higher order only discovered through faith, and by revelation. From the study of these principles certain conclusions could be drawn which were not principles, but were argued to from principles. They were mutable, and elaborated by experience. But the primary truths were unchangeable, and man must observe them or he would die. Hence the statutes of senates, parliaments, peoples, and kings, must be in harmony with these primary principles. His definition of law was: "Law is an ordinance of reason, for the common good, promulgated by him who has care of the community," and became the standard and oft-quoted definition for centuries. He was scrupulous in insisting that every point in it must be observed. The lack of any one of them made the so-called law a negation of law, and a violence. Law must be reasonable, must be for the common good, and must be promulgated by competent authority. For Aquinas that competent authority lay in the will of the people themselves.

When we reflect that this system of thought was hammered out and broadcast through the world

at a time when man was settling down to live in Kingdoms, and States, and Territories: seeking to evolve order out of turbulence and to relate himself in an orderly manner with his neighbour, its value is seen to be priceless. It borrowed from the ancients—much of Aristotle's thinking was taken and Christianized, and much of Roman law was incorporated—but all that was borrowed, and all that was new, was brought into harmony with the great principles derived from a fundamental conception of the rights of man. Much of this right was seen to be natural: but it was only to be fully understood and accepted as a right, partly through experience, but mainly through faith and revelation. God was in man, and Jesus was the supreme revealer. It was in Him, and through Him, that full interpretation became possible.

It has been said that the Canonists of the Middle Ages suffered from cobwebs on the brain, and that their elaboration of ethical teaching bore no vital relation to life. They thought differently. With them economics was a branch of theology, and the teaching of right relations was an essential part of the work of every parish priest throughout the world they touched. How sustained and far-reaching this teaching was may be gathered from Wyclif's tracts, and from the "Parson's Tale" in the *Canterbury Tales*. The latter was doubtless a free translation from a tract, but Chaucer would regard it as typical of the teaching of the good parson of his time. It was this teaching on the rights of man, and his relations, that was absorbed

by the mind of the Western world at a time when it was being formed. It is not our concern in this lecture that the organization of the Church as a whole became corrupt, or that later ages repudiated much of Canon Law. What matters to us is that it was taught, and that it was taught by great Christians, and that its principles were true then, and that they remain true now. The conclusions drawn from the principles were admittedly mutable, but they were in harmony with the principles, and any change occasioned by development must still be in harmony with the immutable. There have been changes, many of them inharmonious, and bitter conflicts have been caused, and must be caused wherever there is discord, for the recognition of the principles is universal. That is largely due to the work of the Canonists who were the servants of Jesus.

Laws for the Rich and the Poor.

It is when we examine the conclusions of the Canonists about the practical affairs of daily life that we see how thoroughly they related their teaching.

To them the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself was sinful. Avarice was one of the seven deadly sins, and avarice meant an eagerness for gain beyond what was necessary for the maintenance of man in his rank of life. The root of the whole matter lay in man's intention. If his desire was the good of his house, and his neighbour, his occupation was lawful. If it was to make money beyond that, it was sin. Money was a means to an end, and when it became an end in itself it spoiled

life, because it robbed life of definite purpose. This theory of money was elaborated at great length by Aquinas and Antonino, Archbishop of Florence (*d.* 1459). The latter summed up his teaching in the *Summa Moralis*, thus: "The object of gain is that by its means man may provide himself and others according to their state, but the object of providing himself and others is that they may live frugally. The object of a virtuous life is the attainment of everlasting glory." There was thus to be a limit to money-making. Work was a good thing and encouraged; but the making of money was regarded as a means to an end, and any accumulation beyond that need was a sin.

It is true that there was latitude of interpretation because of the public good, and the rank of the man. The former was always recognized, and the latter no less clearly stated. Class distinctions were strongly marked in the Middle Ages, and it was believed that God had placed men in ranks and orders, each with its mode of life, and each with its definite responsibility. Chaucer's parson says: "God has ordained that some folk should be more high in estate and degree, and some folk more low, and that every one should be served in his estate and in his degree." Wyclif in his sermons emphasizes the same thought, and says in one of them: "A man should wit to what state a man is called of God, and after the office of this state serve his God truly, as the diverse members serve the body in their kind." This doctrine taught the duty of obedience on the part of inferiors to

superiors, but it also taught concerning the responsibility of the superiors to the inferiors. This was strongly insisted upon by Aquinas and Langenstein, one time Vice-Chancellor of the University of Paris, and later, in 1384, a teacher at the new university of Vienna. He tells the lords of the land that unless they discharge the duties of their class, and rightly govern and protect their subjects, they have no just claim to their rents.

This sense of responsibility was bound up with what the Canonists thought of labour. It must be remembered that life was largely agricultural—although towns and industries were springing up everywhere—and land was regarded as the ultimate source of all wealth. But labour was essential to its development. "God and the labourer," one says, "are the true lords of all that serves for the use of man. All others are either dependants or beggars." From this he argues that the clergy and gentry are debtors to the husbandmen and craftsmen, and only deserve the maintenance of their status as they meet the responsibility their situation imposes.

There is abundant evidence that a strong and sustained attempt was made to end the adulteration of foods. Antonino gives a long list of adulterations practised in Florence. A fuller list is found in a treatise on court-keeping, printed by Wynkyn de Worde about 1510, but belonging to a much earlier date. This deals with bakers who make unwholesome bread; with brewers, and tapsters, and others who use false weights and measures; with butchers, and fishmongers, and any other victuallers who sell

corrupt food. In this care for the food of the people, and this watching of weights and measures, there was a determined attempt to protect the rights of the poor.

There was a similar carefulness against the profiteer. A just price must be paid for everything but it should not be exceeded. There was little or no competition to regulate prices, and there was a danger of merchants forming a ring, or of one merchant establishing a monopoly, and legislative assemblies countered this by fixing a reasonable price for the necessaries of life. When an absolute figure could not be fixed a sliding scale of wages was arranged, determined by the price of bread. A reasonable profit was allowable, but the middleman was looked upon with suspicion, unless he was engaged in a business which was for the public advantage. So diffused was this attempt of the Canonists to secure justice for those who were in danger of being preyed upon, that exhortations to justice were as common among the lay chroniclers and poets as they were among the priests and theologians. Rich men who lived on the labours of others, whether clerical or lay; innkeepers who gave bad service and overcharged; workmen who slacked or spent their substance in taverns—all came under condemnation.

It will be seen that behind all these exhortations and restraints the central thing emphasized was the intention of the trader. The evils of trade sprang from a wrong principle, or motive, and that must be put right before they could be abolished. Could there be a more modern gospel than that?

For the Canonists, economics was a moral question, and its problems could only be solved by a moral answer. Trade was sinful if conducted for the sake of gain, or greed. Antonino summed it up by saying that goods, therefore, or wealth, could be turned to evil by being evilly produced, or evilly distributed, or evilly consumed.

The greatest economic battle of the Middle Ages was about usury. The consideration of this thorny problem was made necessary by the steady growth in the later Middle Ages of capital and investment, and methods had to be found which came within the consent of the Church. The answer of the Canonists, while it varied as to what was permissible or not permissible in the making of profits, the charge of interest on money lent, the investment in business or in partnership, was always the same about the profits themselves—the object of all such trading, or lending, or investment, must not be to make a profit, but to earn a living, or to help others. What was possessed above what was needed for the maintenance of life in its status, belonged to the poor. This attitude, which was consistently maintained throughout the Middle Ages, accounts for the hostility to the Jews in England, whose main occupation appeared to be that of money-lending. When Simon de Montfort expelled them from Leicester in 1200 the Archdeacon Grosseteste wrote to the Countess of Winchester, explaining that they had been so expelled because of their merciless oppression by usury. An expression of the mind of the age is

seen in Shakespere's *Merchant of Venice*, and it is noteworthy that in England the civil law was even stronger than the Canon Law had called for.

Accommodations had to be made to meet expanding trade, but the battle for those who might be wronged never ceased. The rights of man were never lost sight of, and the necessity that the trader, or the lender, or the partner, should be a man of good conscience and motive, was always kept prominent. Man was a moral agent, and he must not engage in any evil work, or work that would be evil for him; and his work and the profits accruing from it must at all times be subordinated to the teachings of Jesus about the rights of man and his relationships.

This survey of the ethical life of man did not exclude the duties of the workman. Work of some kind was held to be a necessity for the fullest development of life, and should be of a kind for which inclination and aptitude were felt and shown. Again good intention and purpose were required, for it was demanded of the labourer that he should be constant and persevering, steady and thorough. He must be honest in his declaration about what he had wrought, and truthful in his claims for what he had to sell or exchange. Antonino deals with the trades and crafts—each with its guilds—in part religious organizations themselves, with their own customs and penalties—with the musicians, artists, husbandmen, pointing out their dangers, condemning the lustful in art, the frivolous in music, and ever reminding them of good intention and high purpose.

The Canonist of the Middle Ages may seem to

the modernist to have been an impracticable dreamer, meddling with things he did not understand, by his fussy law-making hindering the development of trade, and who deserved to be swept aside, as he was later swept aside, by forces too strong for him. But who is there who would say that his general principles were wrong? And who is there who would argue that a stable and contented society can rest upon any other? Is it not an axiom proved by experience, as well as taught by Jesus, that wealth is a peril, and difficult to come by honestly—that is, having regard to one's neighbour? Is not the distribution of property, whether it be in money or estate, equally difficult, and equally full of danger? It may seem to us that the Canonists were grandmotherly in their discussions and decisions about luxury trades, the way wealth was consumed, how a man should give alms and how relate his giving to his own needs, but are not these among the burning questions of our own time? In this matter of wealth and property the Canonists saw deeper than they knew, and by their insistence on intention and responsibility they created an opinion which abides. They carried out a vast experiment which was overwhelmed by new things, but they brought to birth a new conception which no new thing could annihilate. The modernist, seeking for peace in industry, and for a something which approximates to a brotherhood among men, is but groping after what the Canonist saw. He does not use their language, nor would he ask for their specific conclusions, but

he is the heir of their spirit, and he is but repeating their demand in a changed form, and a new language.

If he is a wise modernist he knows that everything depends upon intention and purpose : upon honesty and truth : upon the willingness of all men, rich and poor, lord and peasant, master and man, to recognize and respect the natural right in every other man, and to treat it as he would have his own dealt with. His modernism in these things is no more modern than are many other things he fondly thinks he has thought of for the first time. The very spirit of the reform he so ardently desires ran through the Middle Ages like a flame, and is the only spirit which can produce it at any time. It was due to the influence of the Teacher who taught about man, and man's relationships, and who made it clear that good intention and high purpose and a fine sense of responsibility were dependent upon a knowledge of the Father whom He had come to reveal.

It is impossible to teach the truth about a great ethic without this having its repercussions in directions other than those immediately sought. The Canonists appeared to give more attention to money-making and property than they did to the question of slavery, but what they taught about property had its effect upon slavery. It is impossible to insist upon the natural rights of man, upon justice in dealing between men of all ranks, without the principles of that teaching going deeper than was at first foreseen. What at first may have seemed indirect became pointedly direct, and led to the abolition of slavery altogether.

The Loosening of the Shackles.

At the beginning of the 13th century slavery was accepted as natural and normal. The social ideal was not freedom as we understand it, but justice. The battles of that period were fought to preserve liberties which were being filched, and to increase their number, rather than to win freedom in its largest sense. The latter was never lost sight of, but it was the observance of charters already granted, and the securing of new charters containing other liberties, that occupied the thought and endeavour of the time. That was particularly true in England as the Great Charter illustrates. It demanded specified liberties rather than freedom, but it led to freedom. The framers of the Charter designed better than they knew. Its first intention was to control a king, but its real effect was to set a people free.

It should be noted that even though slavery was accepted as natural and normal the Canonists never taught other than that man's will was free. Man was a child of God, and even though slavery was the result of sin and inevitable in some form or other where life was lived in communities and some must rule and others unfit to rule must serve, yet man's first duty was to God. It followed, therefore, that while there was a recognition of slavery, there was at the same time a deepening belief in the essential equality of all men, bond or free, and those were regarded as being blessed who freed their slaves.

This teaching was not without its effect. Many

of the older excesses of slavery were abolished, and other tyrannies and exactions disappeared. Where there had been many forms of servitude associated with complicated and complex land tenures, one form of servility evolved, known in England as the villein. This improved the lot of most, but fell hardly on those who had nearly achieved their freedom. It caused the lords of the land to scrutinize their rolls more closely, and with the raising of the general standard there were fewer men set free.

But even so, in the earlier part of this period the condition of the villein in England and his companion in servitude on the Continent, was hard and bitter. The Canonists, from Aquinas to as late as Antonino, all write of it; and the town workers, protected by their guilds, which, as has already been said, were in a sense religious, spoke of them with compassion. And change began to be visible. Slowly, at first, but vital. Feudalism itself—the outcome of the amalgamation of Roman and barbaric ideals and customs—began to change. The manor—which was its outward form, and was a social as well as a political organization—exhibited it. The law—tinctured by much Canonist teaching and interpretation, and which leaned toward freedom—helped it. The Magna Charta indicates this tendency in its 40th clause, which promises justice to all without restriction, whether bond or free.

Freedom came to be purchasable. Knights, and barons, impoverished by luxurious living, the cost of maintaining the pomp and splendour of chivalry, and the heavy charges of many campaigns, filled

their purses by the selling of freedom. The villein came to be regarded as belonging to an important class, and a place was found for him in representative assemblies. There was a gradual rise of a farmer class, followed by the rise of a class of free labourers. This growing sense of worth was stirred by the appeals of the Crown, who, when in conflict with the baronage he found himself curbed, or threatened with deposition, never failed to appeal to Church and people. Bondmen who became bowmen and footmen, and who fought so valorously under Edward the First and Edward the Third, were not likely to return to bondage in the interludes of peace. Others escaped and fled to the towns, and many were not followed. Even when man remained in bondage he was only in bond to his own lord. To the rest of the world he stood up as a man.

The Black Death of 1348-9 called a halt to this process. Coming from the East it devastated Britain of one-half of its population of three or four millions, and the problem of labour became pressing and acute. Royal ordinances were issued, and laws were passed which bound the labourer to the soil. If he sought to better himself by flight he could be brought back, and branded like a beast. Scheming and unscrupulous lawyers sought to prove by deeds and rolls that labourers who thought themselves free were bond, and as the courts were manor courts the dice were loaded.

The tyranny of the towns was even worse than that of the countryside, and the attempt to reimpose slavery, even in a modified form, was met by a

bitter and sustained resistance. As the people had risen in France in 1358, and in Italy in 1378, so they rose in England in 1381. The horrors of the Jacquerie and the Ciompi were followed by those of the Peasant revolt. It was the first joust in the long tourney between Capital and Labour. And the demand, this time, was not for "liberties" such as had been specified by the barons in the Great Charter, but freedom.

What had wrought the change? There was a change. Slavery was no longer regarded as natural and normal in England. Something had crept into the Canonist teaching which was transforming it. It was something, too, which raised man's sense of his own status, and widened his conception of human relationship. That something, when it is examined, is found to be nothing less than a deepening understanding of the teaching of Jesus concerning man, his worth, his rights, and his responsibilities. It is not claimed that all those who revolted knew this or appreciated it. Many who took part in the Peasant's revolt were far from doing that. But even they were influenced by the climate—and the mental and spiritual climate of England had changed. A new atmosphere surrounded everything, and it influenced those who hated and resisted it. The Canonists had taught justice; had framed specific laws to secure it; had fought against usury, and had insisted on the benevolent use of property. They had laid a foundation of morality; codified behaviour with a painstaking detail, and touched life at every

point. They had insisted on an essential equality between men in the sight of God, and an equal sense of responsibility between men. And now there came something through the structure of this great piece of work which gave it new life and power.

One of the greatest of those impulses was supplied by John Wyclif. The letter of the Church still ran, but its spirit was decayed and impotent. Wealth had made it fat and gross, and blinded it to its spiritual responsibility. Many of the older orders had ceased to be religious except in name. Where once had been friars, fired with an enthusiasm for the good of the people, were now sturdy and impudent beggars. It was against these sordid and inefficient exercises of the Church that Wyclif levelled his first shafts, and it was by his doctrine of the Dominion of Grace that he created a new atmosphere which was to revolutionize the world.

This Dominion, Wyclif argued, was granted to all men, and because of it the throne of God was the tribunal before which every man could make his personal appeal. The mediæval Church had been built up on the basis of a mediating priesthood. Wyclif's theory of the Dominion of Grace swept that away as unnecessary, and an interference with the natural rights of man. It was but a step to the denial of the priest's power to convert the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the body and blood of Christ, and that step was taken a few months before the insurrection broke out.

There is a sense in which Wyclif may be regarded as a tremendous product of England's insularity.

England was sufficiently far removed from the influence of the more sober and disciplined University of Paris to have an independence of its own, and Oxford had given proof of it in the teaching of Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham. Ockham had been a champion of Church reform, but Wyclif carried his attack beyond anything Ockham had ever attempted. He organized an order of preachers who were his mouthpieces to a public no Schoolman could reach. They roamed through the country, gathering their audiences where they could, and preached a doctrine of emancipation the like of which had never been heard before. These were not begging friars, the decadent remnant of a once great order, mumbling a creed without vitality. They were men with a message so vital that it shook all established things to the core. Its ostensible object was to reform an organization, but its potential quality galvanized a race of men into a new consciousness.

When these men were called upon to tell their world that man needed no other priest than Jesus, and that the Throne was accessible to all who sought it, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. Is it to be wondered at that it ran away with them? Is it to be wondered at that some of the by-products of their work were beyond their control or desire? Men who escape from prisons in which their bodies have been fettered may be pardoned their excesses of relief, but how can they compare with the elation known when the shackles of the spirit are broken! This new freedom of the spirit meant

a new liberty of thought, a new daring of demand, and a new valuation of rights. The very idea of any kind of enforced servitude became intolerable, and the fact itself could not be tolerated. It would not be necessary that these simple preachers should preach rebellion to make rebellion break out. At such a time, and with such Acts as the Statutes of Labourers passed and forced, men revelling in a new conception of the fullness of life could do no other than rebel. The blame of the outbreak was laid at Wyclif's door, and it lost him many aristocratic associations, but that only spurred the fearless reformer to redouble his efforts to spread the truth of man's independence before God, and his rights in the spiritual society of earth.

It was inevitable that such a movement should have its excesses and its excrescences. It percolated through every strata of society, enlisting the aristocrat as well as the peasant, and making preachers of women as well as men. It was coarsened by some and refined by others. There were those who saw in it a flood for the cleansing of the Church, and others who saw in it a tide for the sweetening of the soul of man. To one man it was ecclesiastical, to another political, to another social; but to all it was a new dignity added to life. Before the strength of its flow had passed two things had been done—villeinage had all but disappeared, and the Bible was accepted as the sole authority and source of religious truth.

It is impossible to estimate the value of this reform in the life of man. It meant a new outlook

as well as a new status. In a way, only as yet dimly perceived, old things had passed away and all things had become new. It was an epoch-making event as an achievement, but it was only a new beginning. But what a beginning! Man was free, and he had a Guide. Man could approach God, and he had an Ally. There were still lions in the path, but what were they compared with the lions that had been slain! It was as though the outer bulwarks which defended a distant and fruitful land had fallen, and though there were still deserts to be crossed and Alpine heights to be climbed, the road was open and plain. And all this had been made possible because of the teaching of the Redeemer—who taught of God as Father, of man as His child who should love Him with all his might, and his neighbour as himself.

The Stand for Peace.

It was easier for the Canonists to impose their conceptions of equity and freedom upon the peoples of their own realms than it was to compel the peoples to live at peace. As social life grew increasingly complex they found it impossible to maintain some of the simplicities of their theories of economics, and the growing sense of nationhood made it as impossible to avoid having to grapple with the questions of war. It is true that during this period the theory of the Church was that the Church ruled the world, and in a very large measure it did impress its will on the world, but human nature was yet too barbaric to have overcome its

fighting instincts, and wars were common, and started on the flimsiest of pretexts.

This easy temper to fly to arms could not be curbed all at once, nor could it be protested against on every occasion. That was the difficulty. But in spite of every compromise that was made it was taught that war was foreign to the spirit of Christ, and inconsistent with the Sermon on the Mount. Its futility was often pointed out, and one argued: "It costs more than it gains," and: "Although it is true that the object is peace, nevertheless peace is more secure when it is obtained by councils rather than by arms." Another wrote: "Good men are wont to labour without respite for peace, exploring every method whereby the discords of men may be brought back to peace; not giving up the pursuit because peace flies from them, but using every effort to overtake it in its flight." What was meant by peace was clearly set forth by Aquinas: "Two separate concepts are discoverable under the word peace—namely, first, that two or more things or persons should be united, and that, secondly, they should agree." True peace, for Aquinas, was where every one was in agreement, and wished to be in agreement.

This conception, based on the teaching of Jesus dealing with relations, insisted on the desire for concord, and a desire based on eternal principles. Society in all its activities, political and social as well as economic, was held to come under this rule. How right it was time has proved, and it was never more fully recognized as true than now.

What higher conception of the peaceable State can there be than that of Dante's, which was based on Augustine's *City of God?* or in the writings of Aquinas, who wrote: "Sufficiency of corporeal goods and of the life of virtue is the end of human confederation; but since the life of virtue is itself ordained to something infinitely higher—namely the blessed vision of God—this ultimate purpose of individual human life must be also the ultimate purpose of any human confederation." The beauty of the ideal is not lessened by the fact that it was not realized. The point is that the truth was given into the thought of the world to live there, and to operate through the centuries as leaven leavening the lump.

There were times when the desire for peace resulted in Leagues of Peace being formed, such as that of the Lombard Cities in 1234. This followed a meeting at which it was estimated 400,000 were present, gathered from many cities, and which was addressed by a preaching friar who denounced the evils of war, its un-Christian character when waged between Christian men, and who extolled the blessings of peace. But Leagues of Peace did not end the matter, nor did they settle the problems of when wars were just or otherwise. Aquinas found his conclusions in the following: War was justified only as it was declared by the public authority of the State; that it had a just cause; and that the intention of those who went to fight was a right one. His statement of what constituted a just defensive war was borrowed from Augustine: "The safety of the State must be preserved, for

without it would come many violent deaths, and evils innumerable both spiritual and temporal." He accepted, likewise, Augustine's statement about a just defensive war "as those in which injuries are avenged against the city or nation that has been guilty of them, either because they neglected to punish the mischief committed by their citizens, or to restore what their citizens had injuriously taken away." A just war was thus, to Aquinas, a defence of peace.

Later writers accepted this definition, although some added rules on the conduct of war. John Bromyard, the English friar preacher, in writing on war (1522), declared that it must be accompanied by a desire for the glory of God, faithfulness without treason, mercy, and all other virtues. Antonino, if not so idealistic, was more practical. He exhorted the soldier to aim at the things Bromyard indicates, and he held that "God alone can make us men," and that such virtues as a soldier needed—the abstaining from robbery, uncleanness, blasphemy, drunkenness, sacrilege, and other vices—came by grace. He discussed in detail the restitution that should be paid to the innocent who had been despoiled; the guilt of those who in any way aided an unjust war; the destruction of enemy property; the justification for the Crusades; the aims and motives of the professional soldier; whether the clergy should fight; the morality of stratagems; the obligations of treaties—and a hundred other details relating to the conduct of war. Still later, Francesca Vittoria, a Spanish Dominican friar, summed it up in a phrase: "There is but one just

cause of war, the violation of a right." He went further than his predecessors who had recognized religion, nationality, culture, adventure, and trade, as the causes of war, none being justifiable except religion, for Vittoria did not exclude religion, nor increase of glory by extension of Empire. It will thus be seen that in one of the most difficult periods of the history of man, the teachers most under the influence of Jesus sought to reform society by the abolition, or curtailing, of one of its greatest evils. If they did not succeed they lessened its horrors, and sent abroad ideas concerning it which were to bear fruit in later centuries.

Enough has been said to show how active the Christian thinkers and leaders of those centuries were. They sought to revolutionize the life of men and States as they had conceived of reform through the teaching of Jesus. They were not always consistent, but their difficulties were tremendous, and their battle was against strong tradition, and much natural instinct. Their systems of ethics dealing with money, property, interest, usury, wages, rent, and the many other things which came under their review, might have been faulty in some of their details, but they were sound in principle and intention, and were given the widest prominence. They strove to control production, commerce, and consumption; to promote labour, and a love of good work; to care for the aged, and the poor, and the sick; and to spread abroad the knowledge and love of justice and merciful dealing. Much of what they did was undone or obscured

by later events, but what they did and what they sought to do stands on record. And even though the exact form of much of their work has disappeared, the spirit which animated it has survived, and is a priceless heritage. Many who hold and cherish it have no knowledge of where it sprang, and only see it as a natural right of man. That it exists is due to those followers of the Reformer who caught it from their Master, and at a time when the Church was united used an unparalleled organization to broadcast it.

The instrument they employed was decaying but it was everywhere. In the village the Church was the centre of everything, and in the town it could not be ignored. It stood for a faith which secured for men their equality before God, and the protection of their natural rights as His children. The organization itself fell, as it deserved to fall, but the good work it had done did not pass out of life. The vision given to man did not fade because authority dwindled. Ecclesiastically the Middle Ages ended in tragic failure, but socially they saw the birth of a new age for mankind. The letter died, but the spirit lived, and the spirit was the gift of God in Jesus through the ministries of those who sought to make Him known.

CHAPTER IX.

The Battle in the Gate.

INDEPENDENCE always exacts its price, and sometimes the price is a heavy one. The liberation of a man's mind is the release of a new energy, and if it be untaught and undisciplined it is capable of great damage. The breakdown of the Church as a world mentor, competent to impose its authority; and the growth of a new spirit of independence, freed from inhibitions and terrorisms and not yet trained to be obedient to the control of an educated conscience, had startling consequences.

This freedom came to England at a time when the world took a leap forward in many directions. A spirit of adventure possessed the races of men. Mariners navigated through hitherto uncharted seas. From Portuguese, Spanish, and English ports daring masters of the oceans found their way into regions old and new, unlocking the hoarded wealths of the one, and the doors of opportunity in the other. Not the least of these treasures was the store of ancient literature opened up to the world, creating a new interest in learning for its

own sake, and giving an impetus to many new forms of experiment and research.

Under this rush of excited and exciting life many things broke down. One of the first to crack, afterwards to be shattered as a system, was the ethical standard set up by the Church for the government of the economic life of the world. It did not break without a struggle, but no imposed ethic could withstand the attack hurled against it by the whirling tides of such a vast upheaval. From that time on, any ethic to be of value must be born of "intention," as the Canonists had insisted it should be, and not of rule. They had set up an object lesson of the way in which "intention" should work, and that object lesson remained in thought, even when as a framework of conduct it fell into ruin. The new framework had to be built upon the foundation of an enlightened conscience, something growing from within, and for that, time in spacious measure must be granted. And patience—for there would be much travail.

The sudden expansion of the world, the growth of the new trading spirit opening up unheard of markets, the swift illumining of man's mind by contact with other races and other literatures, the lifting from the spirit of the trammels of priestly interference, were calculated to destroy everything that rested upon any but the surest bases. The marvel was that so much survived—for this was something more searching in its attack than the overthrow of Rome by the barbarians—and yet much did survive. How great a thing it was that

survived may be judged when it is remembered what it had to combat in England in the centuries that immediately followed.

In England—and it is with England that we have now mainly to do—the 16th and 17th centuries saw the operation of three mighty forces, each of which threatened to destroy many of the reforms the followers of Jesus had accomplished. They had made God accessible to man. They had made man conscious of himself as a free being. They had given him the beginnings of a conscience about relationship. In one way or another these main gains in the life of man were to be assaulted by despotism, by the imprisonment of the spirit, and by an impoverishment of conditions which, working together, might well have been irresistible. They would have been irresistible but for the abiding of the imperishable in the emancipated spirit of man, and which was constantly refreshed.

The Attack on Freedom.

The first of these giant forces reached its height with Henry the Eighth. Henry's beginning was promising, for he remedied many abuses, and raised hopes which his war-like temper and ambition soon dashed to the ground. Peace came later when Wolsey rose to great power, but peace introduced new dangers. Wolsey was a man of tremendous energy and great executive ability, but he was consumed by a master-passion to make the King absolute, and by his gathering into his own hands the direction of home and foreign affairs, both of church

and state, he made the path to despotism an open one. He hated parliaments and would have ruled without them, enforcing taxation by no other authority than his own, but the threat of a rising held him in check for a time. He created a monster who destroyed him, but before death came to him, a broken and a dishonoured man, he had trampled into ruin many a promising institution born of the new spirit in man, and had so fought against the growing ideal of freedom that it lay helpless on the sod like a bird with a broken wing.

Thomas Cromwell completed the work which Wolsey had begun. It was Cromwell who prompted the King to break with Rome, claim the headship of the Church in England, and end a rival power in the State by making the dignitaries of the Church dependent on the Crown. He muzzled the preachers, and sought by a tyranny no less drastic than that of the most absolute of Popes to force a reformed faith down the throats of the people. And as he tyrannized over the Church so he subjugated parliament and judges, juries and the people, the King himself not escaping the terror he created. If insurrection broke out it was suppressed with merciless severity. If a noble or a scholar opposed Cromwell's autocratic will his head paid the price of his rashness. As he had made the church his tool so he made parliaments. He swept away the last vestiges of constitutional freedom, and levied taxes, made laws, and ordered punishments, without regard to any other thought than that of making his royal master absolute and untrammelled.

He robbed the monasteries and enriched the nobles and gentry he favoured; and later, when necessity drove him, he blew hot and cold with Protestant and Catholic alike. But great as he was he failed in his most ambitious scheme of overthrowing Austria, and Henry turned on him with savage hate and cast him to the wolves eager to tear him to pieces. But his work had been done. Lords and Commons, the Church and justice, lay at the King's mercy, and liberty was but the name of some abandoned thing.

The times between Henry and Elizabeth were lurid with bitter persecution, but there was a slackening of the claim to absolutism fostered and perfected by Wolsey and Cromwell. Nor did Elizabeth fully revive it. If she lacked great political wisdom she sought by conciliation and compromise to secure internal peace. If she was capable of lying and intrigue, pitiless in her indifference to the weal or woe of those she played with in her great game of ruling England, she sought peace and order within her realm. If, in theory, she claimed her father's absolutism, she softened it in practice; although she summoned parliaments charily, and sought to stifle freedom of speech. She was sagacious enough to be sensible of great changes taking place about her even though she did not fully understand them, for her reign was starred by many glorious happenings, with which, however, in this lecture we have nothing to do.

It was the first of the Stuarts who revived, and in a more hateful form, the claim of absolutism

The Tudors had been content to be absolute in themselves, and free from any foreign control whether in Church or State. James the First claimed that he was free from the control of all law, and owned responsibility to none but himself. In a speech in the Star Chamber, he said: "As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do, so it is a presumption and a high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or to say that a king cannot do this or that." He scolded his first parliament when it protested against this absurdity, and flouted it by seeking to raise revenue to meet his extravagance without its consent. He outraged justice as he had outraged parliament and the right to a free conscience in religion. He sought and failed to secure an alliance with Spain by a marriage of his son Charles with the Infanta, although in this nobles and commons alike opposed him. But in spite of him the power of parliament increased. When James died the country turned to Charles in an ecstasy.

But the country had reckoned without its host. Charles early made it plain that he would tolerate neither parliament nor Puritan. Bishop Laud became the head of the Church, and was quickly recognized as being of greater danger than the Pope, for Laud was regarded as a traitor within the camp. The Earl of Strafford became the champion of the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, and fostered the hate of parliaments which Charles never lost. Charles sought by every twist and device he could invent to raise money without

sanction, and exploited every resource he knew to make an end of those who opposed him. But ingenious and unscrupulous as he was, and backed by the subtleties and stratagems of Laud and Strafford, he found it impossible to maintain his grip. The England he ruled was neither that of Henry nor Elizabeth, and still less that of Mary. A leaven had been at work permeating life so thoroughly that the pretensions of a Divine Right such as Charles protested was an intolerable puerility. Wolsey and Cromwell had been flung to their fate by a despot master. Charles found his master in the people of England, expressing themselves as never before. Such a tyranny as his was now unthinkable, and must be terminated, and the process was a sharp one. When Charles went down it was to the blow of the people resolved on freedom.

The Return of the Priest.

The second of the threats against the new liberty was the attempt to restore Catholicism. There were many motives behind this long-sustained struggle to reimpose the authority of the Church, some of them worthy, and some ignoble. A united Church, exercising an imperious authority, is a convenient aid to a despot. A people free in thought and soul are prone to assert themselves independently, and such freedom not infrequently runs to fanaticism and folly. Such insurrections could be dragooned into stillness by the brute force of arms, but a much cheaper and safer way was

to drug them into quiescence by the opiates of a spiritual autocracy. Whatever the motive the attempt was made, and there were times when it seemed likely to succeed. If success had crowned its efforts the history of England and reform would have been a totally different thing.

The tide of battle ebbed and flowed during the reign of Henry the Eighth. Thomas Cromwell's great aim was a pacific evolution of the life of the Church which time, and the influence of the new learning, would bring about. Norfolk, who succeeded him, cherished the same dream. Mary's accession to the throne changed the situation at a blow. She had never relinquished the older faith, and her marriage with Philip of Spain meant not only absolute submission to the Papacy, but the complete overthrow of the Reformation She forced her will on parliament, which acknowledged the authority of the Papal See, and was absolved from its sin of schism. She sent a great figure like Cranmer to the stake, as well as boys and women ; and the fires of Smithfield were typical of similar burnings throughout the land. There was reaction against this mad fanaticism, some of it gross and sacrilegious as might have been expected, and in the end Mary's fierce and implacable hatred defeated itself. Her death alone saved a revolt.

Elizabeth compromised, despoiling the Church as her father had done, never approaching the religious differences of her time in a spirit other than that of a flippant coquetry, careful only for peace and

order, and leaving to Archbishop Parker the task of restoring order within the Church. Her suppression of the Catholic rising which sprang up in support of Mary Stuart was a political one, and had little to do with her religious convictions, although as her reign progressed Catholicism waned. A new order of clergy took the place of the Catholic priest. The Pope was held to be responsible for the conspiracies that were hatched against England, and a passionate loyalty to Queen and country, and the Catholic atrocities on the Continent, deepened the hostility to Rome. Elizabeth's persecution of the Jesuits was based on a sense of political danger and she regretted its necessity. If that, and the execution of Mary Stuart, led the way to the Armada, it ended the threat of a foreign yoke. In her own land she held the religious balance as even as she could, hating the enthusiasms of both sides alike, as the "Independents" found to their cost. But even that persecution was but a part of the policy of order within the State which was her consuming passion at all times.

James the First would have sold the entrance to the pass by an alliance with Spain, but it was left to Charles the First to attempt the real task of restoring Catholicism. The Catholic ascendancy was supreme in Germany and France, and Laud's policy threatened a similar ascendancy in England. His avowed aim was to make the Church of England a reformed branch of the Catholic Church. He set himself to suppress Puritanism and all its works, and he elevated a Catholic standard in doctrine and

ritual. He pursued his course with a reckless and unscrupulous activity, supported the claim of the crown to absolutism, and borrowed the power of the crown to exercise a similar absolutism in the affairs of the Church. His reign of terror led to the founding of New England, and ended in his own undoing. He found himself as unable to impose a strait-waistcoat on religious freedom as Charles had done to maintain his pretensions to a Divine Right. Again, the England he sought to paralyse with his authority was a different one from the time when Henry had it at his feet.

The Crushing of the Poor.

The third influence which had its beginnings in the Statutes of Labourers, and remained a powerful factor affecting the lives of the poor until Elizabeth, was the steady and relentless impoverishing and repression of the poor. There were two causes mainly responsible for this.

The first had to do with the spirit of the peasant which had been liberated and enriched. It is true that both liberty and enrichment were of a miserably poor and inadequate kind when compared with modern standards, but in their day they were an immense advance on what had been known before. The peasant was now his own man, free to move where he would and to serve whom he would. That he sometimes asserted this right without discretion, and often with violence, is but what was to have been expected; for the wise use of liberty is not given with the gift itself. He

came to be regarded as a menace to the peace of the State, and much of the despotism of the Tudors was possible because it promised the wealthy land-holders a protection they could not provide for themselves.

The rapid growth of the wool industry, leading to the enclosures of common lands for the extension of sheep farms, added to the woes and miseries of the landless class. This spoliation of the land of the poor which began in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and continued for a hundred years and more in the counties of Kent, Worcester, Warwick, Essex, and Suffolk, was further aggravated by the eviction of the smaller peasantry that their holdings might be added to the greater farms. The prosperity of the new industry greatly increased the wealth of England, but the enclosures of the 15th and 16th centuries, the conversion of arable into pasture land, and the dispossession of the small-holder, reduced many to beggary. It was not until Elizabeth that any attempt was made to deal with the relief of the poor. By that time the situation was of such grave danger that something had to be done. The country was infested by marauders, ever ready for revolt or civil war, and upon whom repressions and hangings had little effect. Elizabeth's measures, and the growing prosperity of the country, helped to solve the problem, and made life a more bearable thing.

Such were the outstanding features of the life of this fateful period. A government which clutched at an irresponsible absolutism, an organized Church

in the hands of the despotism, often its tool, and frequently reactionary, and an intense individualism on the part of the wealthy meeting the growing individualism of the poor with a rapacity and a repression that drove them to an abject poverty. And yet it was a period which prepared the way for modern England. Something was at work which was to break absolutism for ever, to liberate the mind and soul of England, and to blaze a trail for a new standard for labour and the rights of the poor.

It is often urged that the Church of the time in England was gravely negligent in not achieving more than it did, but that is to expect more than is warranted. Its authority was more nominal than actual, and for the greater part of the time it was muzzled. Besides it was dawning that religion was something more than a formality—that it was a life to be accepted and enjoyed, and to be employed in the creation of an "intention" which should govern everything. The growth of that knowledge was responsible for the mighty changes which made modern England possible, and its springs and inspirations were men whose minds and hearts were full of the teachings and spirit of Jesus.

Three Great Reformers.

It is easy, now, to speculate upon the misery and bloodshed which might have been avoided if, at the beginning of this period, men had listened to those who most accurately interpreted Him. They were there, and they were prominent, and

their influence was widespread, but their counsels were ignored. Erasmus sought valiantly to prevail with the young Emperor, Charles the Fifth, and with Pope Leo the Tenth, but they refused reform. Colet and More had direct access to Henry the Eighth, and these three men touched multitudes of minor potentates, lay and ecclesiastical, by whom they were lauded and honoured but who gave them no value in their policies. The consequence of this refusal was a tide of revolution which led to Puritanism, to the founding of the American Republic, and which broke at last against the barricades of Paris in the ghastly horrors of the French Revolution.

It is true that the Oxford Reformers failed to stem the tide, but their work was not in vain. Their influence ran through the generations following, and their ideas were never without witness. Many of them are bearing fruit in our own day. The great work of breaking the fetters of despotism had to be done, and it was done. If the Puritans gave more attention to the winning of political and religious liberty than to the reformation of the social order they made democracy possible, and ensured the vast social changes which democracy makes possible. Some of the Puritans were narrow and bigoted, but they gave a much needed check to a loose age, braced and purified society, prepared the way for freedom in worship, and established the sense of individual dignity in man which made his demands for political and industrial recognition irresistible. These were tremendous things to

attempt, and, as will be seen, the even greater matters of a Christian relationship between men were not forgotten.

It is impossible to say how much of this was due to the teaching of the Oxford Reformers. It worked profoundly in Thomas Cromwell's mind, and, however wrongly he employed it, it directed much of his ecclesiastical policy, and must have percolated through the entire strata of the period. The very strength which Luther employed to resist some of its implications is proof that he feared it; and even where it was not admitted, echoes of it are to be found everywhere. If the Reformers failed to realize their aims it was because the temper of the age set other things first, important in themselves if not the most important, but which were deemed the most important. They stood at a turning point in the history of the world, and they held up a standard of guidance for man's best growth. That standard challenges the thought of to-day as the only way of high and profound reform. Let us look at these men and see who they were, and what they desired.

John Colet—A Preacher of the Gospel.

John Colet may be said to be the founder of a rational Christianity in the Teutonic world. At the call of the great literary revival he went to Florence, but he remained aloof from the main enthusiasms of the Florentines, and returned to Oxford to apply his knowledge of Greek to things far more humane in their social, religious, and

political applications than was the case in Italy. Colet used Greek as a key to unlock the inner meaning of the Gospels and the Epistles, and found in them the basis of a rational religion. He strove to strip the theology of the Middle Ages of its mysticism and allegory, and to set in its place the simple and vivid picture of Jesus as the Saviour of men. He loathed the fantastic excrescences which had grown up about the Church, and spurned with disgust the claims that were made for the holy relics. His consuming passion was to make Christ known as the fount and hope of all reform.

Colet was well equipped for his task, and he embraced it with an absorbing enthusiasm. He might have chosen a different career. His father, Sir Henry Colet, was a wealthy merchant, in favour at the court of Henry the Seventh, and more than once Lord Mayor of London. John had taken his degree as Master of Arts in the University of Oxford, and, had he so chosen, a brilliant career in commerce and at the Court was at his feet. He elected to take orders, and one of his first efforts on his return from Italy was to deliver a series of lectures on the Epistles of Paul.

It is possible that during his visit to Italy Colet had come into contact with Savonarola. Whether he heard that great prophet preach or not there was something of Savonarola's dynamic energy in Colet's style. Young as he was, and not yet ordained, he attracted the most learned to his lectures, many of whom came to criticize his new approach to the fundamentals of faith and religion,

and all of whom found much to think about. His method of dealing with the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians was in direct contrast with the practice of the dominant school. It was not his custom to deal with individual texts, but to seek to bring out the direct practical meaning of the Epistles as the messages of a living man to living men. This free interpretation won him many enemies, but his justification is found in his own declaration that "he had tried to the best of his power, with the aid of Divine grace, to bring out Saint Paul's true meaning." "Whether, indeed," he adds, "I have done this I hardly can tell, but the greatest desire to do so I have had."

In the course of these lectures Colet interpreted the meaning of the Epistles to the times in which he lived, and throughout their course he was filled with a passion for the reform of the Church in its usages as well as its doctrines. He had an abounding enthusiasm for Paul, but, to the horror of the Schoolmen, whose theory of inspiration placed Paul's words on a level in authority with those of the Saviour Himself, he declared "that when he turned from the Epistles to the wonderful majesty of Christ, their writings, much as he loved them, seemed to him to become poor, as it were, in comparison with the words of their Lord." In his zeal to return to the simplicities he may have done an injustice to the work of the earlier Schoolmen, but his hatred of the mass of dreary and lifeless subtlety which had grown up about it, and which his contemporaries were preaching, was a just one.

It found expression in his advice to young theological students: "Keep to the Bible and the Apostles' Creed; and let divines, if they like, dispute about the rest."

So, for years, Colet toiled at Oxford without official recognition, casting his bread upon the waters, content that young students were now studying the Bible rather than the Schoolmen. One of them, whether he knew it or not, was young Tyndale. In 1505 Colet was summoned to the Deanery of Saint Paul's, and in that great cathedral church he continued his work. He preached from the Scriptures. He discarded the elaborate garments of the office, and wore a simple robe. He lived within his revenues, and gave his private income away. His habits were severely frugal, his table talk serious, and now Christ became the centre of his talk and his preaching. His father's death left him master of a large fortune, and the accession of Henry the Eighth, a patron of the New Learning, opened the way to any preferment he could choose. Colet proved superior to all such temptations. He employed his wealth in founding in St. Paul's Churchyard a school, in which 153 children who could read and write, without any restriction as to nation or country, should receive a sound Christian education. The intention of his school was, as he said: "Specially to increase knowledge and worship of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and give Christian life and manners in the children."

To emphasize this, he placed an image of the

Child Jesus above the master's chair, with the motto carved on the pedestal: "Hear ye Him." He employed the best masters he could find and paid them liberally, and he was like a father to his boys. But his interest in his school did not interfere with his work as a preacher. His simple, earnest, Scriptural preaching, in the English tongue, attracted many Lollards, although Colet was no Lollard himself; but his sermon before both Houses of Convocation on February 6th, 1512 nearly caused him to be denounced as one. In this sermon he so condemned the scandalous living of many of the clergy—their pride of life, their lust of the flesh, their extravagances and worldly ambitions—and so insisted on the reform of the clergy themselves in these matters that among those who hated his liberalism he became a marked man. Bishop Fitz-James indicted him for heresy, and for a time he was silenced.

But the sermon had not been preached in vain. Colet had made it felt that if there was to be a revival of religion it must begin with the clergy and the bishops. He had urged that the real reform which was needed was not a reform of doctrine, but a reform of life which would banish superstition. He had made it clear that the depraved lives of the clergy were a worse heresy than any that infected men's minds, and nothing short of a regenerated life could sweep that away.

A year later Colet was to be tested again.

The rulers of Europe did not regard themselves as limited to their own territories. They dreamed

of universal dominion, and the young Henry was no exception to the rule. Colet inveighed against this, and his bishop, ever eager to make trouble for the fearless Dean, reported him to the King. Henry sent for him privately and bade him continue his good work. If Henry thought that this clemency would purchase Colet's silence he was mistaken. On Good Friday, 1513, Colet preached before the King, and as when he preached before Convocation he preached to the bishops and clergy, on this occasion he preached to the King. Erasmus says: "He preached wonderfully on the victory of Christ exhorting all Christians to fight and conquer under the banner of their King. He showed that when wicked men, out of hatred and ambition, fought with and destroyed one another, they fought under the banner, not of Christ, but of the devil. He showed, further, how hard it is to die a Christian death (on the field of battle); how few undertake a war except from hatred or ambition; how hardly possible it is for those who really have that brotherly love, without which 'no one can see the Lord,' to thrust their sword into their brother's blood; and he urged, in conclusion, that instead of imitating the example of Cæsars and Alexanders, the Christian ought rather to follow the example of Christ his Prince."

To preach a sermon like that to a King preparing for a campaign, was to deliver himself into the hands of his enemies, and this time they were sure that they had him fast—only to be foiled once more. The King sent for Colet, embraced him

before those who were hot for his destruction, and afterwards said in the hearing of them all: "Let every one have his own doctor, and let every one favour his own; this man is the doctor for me."

Colet's attitude of mind toward the worship of relics declared during a visit to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, is recorded by Erasmus, who accompanied him. They were shown bones of every kind which they were expected to kiss, until Colet's dislike caused the verger to shut them up in disgust at such profanity. When, later, the many treasures of silks, gold, and jewels were exhibited, Colet inquired caustically whether, as Becket was a poor man and kind to the poor, he would not now be better pleased if the costly baubles were distributed to lighten the poor man's load of poverty. The verger, doubting Colet's sanity, turned the difficult visitor over to a prior, who knowing something of Colet's importance, offered him a rag as a precious relic, which Colet declined with disdain. On the way home a mendicant monk offered Colet the upper leather of what he claimed was a part of Becket's shoe, and expected it to be honoured with the usual kiss. On that Colet boiled over and exclaimed passionately: "What! Do these fools want us to kiss the shoes of every good man? They pick up the filthiest things they can find and ask us to kiss them." The rest of the journey was spent in a discussion of how such abuses could be remedied, Erasmus urging that a reform, or sudden remedy, might be worse than the disease. They little thought that

a quarter of a century later the gold and jewels would find their way into the royal exchequer, and Becket's very bones would be cast into the fire.

In 1518 Colet fell a victim to the sweating sickness, and his health was so shattered that he began to prepare for his end. He made full and careful provision for his school, but, unlike most reformers, he made no attempt to fetter those who followed him in thought or action. He never claimed that he had discovered all the truth, but only that he was a humble learner in a school which had yet much to reveal. If the later Protestants had been as liberal and catholic as this reformer was, much of heart-break and sadness might have been saved. He died on the 16th September, 1519. Erasmus was inconsolable, and wrote to a friend: "I seem as though only half of me were alive, Colet being dead. What a *man* has *England* lost, and what a *friend* have I lost." More wrote: "For generations we have not had amongst us any one man more learned or holy." The inscription on his coffin bore witness that he died "to the great grief of the whole people, by whom, for his integrity of life and divine gift of preaching, he was the most beloved of all his time." His remains were laid in the tomb he had himself prepared in the cathedral he had adorned.

I have dealt at length with Colet rather than with Luther, or Calvin, because he more truly represents the spirit of Jesus as that is applied to the reform of life; and because of his influence

on Erasmus and More whose work was destined to have such important consequences in after years. In himself Colet was a great Christian, a fearless reformer, a liberal thinker, an interpreter of the Gospels in an entirely new sense: through his friends and pupils he was to be the inspiration of an even greater movement of reform, and to be perpetuated in a work which is by no means yet fulfilled. The rigid boundaries upon thought imposed by the Protestant reformers delayed the full action of his influence, but they did not destroy it, nor did they prevent it from spreading like rivulets of refreshing water through many arid plains of fruitless discussion. We shall see how he stirred the imagination of two men whose work, widely different from his own, was yet of superlative value.

Erasmus—The Wielder of a Mighty Pen.

On his return from Italy Colet had paused in Paris, and while there heard of a student called Erasmus. When in 1498 Erasmus came to Oxford to study Greek under Grocyn and Linacre, Colet welcomed him, and soon conquered his heart. The poor foreign scholar, impoverished by dishonest guardians, eking out a poverty-stricken living by teaching, was full of gratitude to his Oxford friends, and still more impressed by Colet's earnestness. "He seemed like one inspired," he writes of Colet at this time. "In his voice, his eye, his whole countenance and mien, he seemed raised, as it were, out of himself." Before he left England in

January, 1500, although he had been educated at Paris, and in the most rigid sect of the Scholastic theologians, Erasmus was a changed man. How changed he did not know, but the work had been begun which was to make him the editor of a Greek Testament which greatly influenced the coming Reformation.

Before this work was done Erasmus suffered many torments. His purpose on leaving England was to visit Italy, the funds for which had been provided by his English friends, but the customs officers at Dover relieved him of his money and he reached Paris ill and poor. During this period of struggle and poverty, driven from place to place by plague and want, he wrote the *Enchiridion*, a little book which became a great favourite with the Reformers, and which showed how markedly Colet had affected his thought. It taught that Christianity was not an acceptance of dogmas, but a self-sacrificing loyalty to Christ. After another visit to England he realized his dream of visiting Italy, and on his return, while recovering from an illness in More's house, he wrote the *Praise of Folly*. This was printed in Paris in 1511, and had an enormous circulation. The *Praise of Folly* was a satire of follies of every kind. It twitted the bookworm, the sportsman and the superstitious; it poked fun at the grammarian, the rhetorician and the lawyer; it ridiculed the hair-splitting of the Schoolmen and the fatuous and futile dogmatism of the theologians; it pilloried the monks for their lack of faith and charity, and

kings and princes for their tyranny; and finally, it execrated the Pope for his warlike passions. Within a few months the book ran through seven editions, and was being read all over Europe.

The next two years Erasmus spent at Cambridge, teaching Greek, and during this period he prepared for the press his works on Jerome and the New Testament. In 1514 he journeyed to Basle that they might be printed by Froben. Learned men all over Europe awaited their publication, some with eagerness and many with alarm. One Martin Dorpius of Louvain University became the publicist of a large and powerful party, and published a protest against them. What Erasmus intended to achieve by his New Testament is best gathered from his own preface to the first edition. The stream of reform, he declared, depends upon the way men are thinking, and the power of books which affect thought are therefore of prime importance. This book showed that Erasmus now stood where Colet had stood twenty years before, and Erasmus did for the world what Colet had done for England.

The intellectual tendency in Italy was toward scepticism, and the atmosphere of the Papal court was more pagan than Christian. In 1516, Pomponatius, the most distinguished philosopher of the day, wrote a work in which he denied the immortality of the soul. Machiavelli, the greatest political philosopher of his age, had already published *The Prince*, a system of political philosophy based upon keen and Godless self-interest, and which defied, if it did not deny, the obligation of

the Golden Rule. On the other hand the Schoolmen rested everything on the absolute inspiration of the Vulgate version of the Bible, regarded Greek and Hebrew as heretical tongues, and strained every effort to keep Christianity and the New Learning hopelessly apart. But proud and scornful as they were, their social and political morality was as gross and sensual as that of the pagans, as Erasmus had often pointed out. Yet both parties sought to keep the emoluments of the Church they betrayed, and whose central social doctrine they held up to ridicule. Erasmus believed that these parties were leading men astray—that there was a Christianity which rested upon facts—and feared neither the dogmatisms of the Schoolmen nor the inquiring of the philosophers.

In his preface he appealed first to the free-thinking, and then to the dogmatic schools. To the former he said: "Why do not Christians with yet more abandon espouse the cause of their Master and Prince? Shall Christ be put in comparison with Zeus and Aristotle—His doctrine with their insignificant precepts? Whatever other philosophers may have been, He alone is a teacher from heaven; He alone was able to teach certain and eternal wisdom; He alone taught things pertaining to our salvation, because He alone is its Author; He alone absolutely practised what He preached, and is able to make good what He promised." To the latter, whose blind faith in the plenary inspiration of the Vulgate made them his bitterest opponents, and the logic of whose position made them resist with

all their might every attempt to make the Bible the book of the people, he appealed: "If the footprints of Christ be anywhere shown to us we kneel down and adore. Why do we not rather venerate the living and breathing picture of Him in these books? If the vesture of Christ be exhibited, where will we not go to kiss it? Yet were His whole wardrobe exhibited nothing could represent Christ more vividly and truly than these evangelical writings. Statues of wood and stone we decorate with gold and gems for the love of Christ. They only profess to give us the form of His body: these books present us with a living image of His most holy mind. Were we to have seen Him with our own eyes, we should not have had so intimate a knowledge as they give of Christ, speaking, healing, dying, rising again, as it were, in our own actual presence."

Erasmus now fully shared Colet's faith that the Christian religion consisted not in the gulping of a creed, but in loving devotion to the person of Christ. Nothing so revealed Him as the books of the Bible which told of His life and ministry, and which should be studied with reverence and love. They were to be read, not that men might become doctors of learning, but that the reader might catch the spirit of Him whom they served. They should be read by all, Turk and Saracen, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, and each in their own tongue. It was with this motive that Erasmus sent his New Testament out into the world.

Colet welcomed it with enthusiasm. He was in

poor health, harried by his Bishop, and the thought that this friend of his heart was now speaking to all Europe filled him with gladness. In a beautiful letter expressing his joy, he said: "The volumes . . . are here both eagerly bought and everywhere read." The New Testament had its critics both in England and on the Continent. Luther discovered in it a teaching which differed fundamentally from his own, and grieved over it. He disliked the tendency to the Pelagian heresy which he thought he detected, and strongly objected to Jerome being given a higher place than Augustine. In the second edition of 1518, Erasmus not only corrected the many translation errors of the first, but met the points raised in criticism with a calm and reasoned dignity, though this by no means bridged the gulf. The Protestant Reformation worked out on Augustinian lines. The standpoint of the Oxford Reformers in their attitude toward the Scriptures had to wait centuries before it was again made the rallying ground of a new understanding of the Word of God.

It is impossible to estimate the value of this "back to the Christ" movement which was instinct in all that Erasmus wrote. It did not prevail at the time, but it remained as a leaven, and it never ceased to work. How it affected Erasmus's views on other matters is seen in his innumerable writings on current affairs. These were voluminous, and unsparing in their condemnation of the scandals of the Church, the warlike passions of popes and kings, and the boundless disputes of Schoolmen and

theologians. Part of what he taught about these things is to be found in the *Christian Prince*, written for the special benefit of Prince Charles who, in 1516 at sixteen years of age, had succeeded to the crowns of Castile and Aragon, as well as to the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, and of the Island of Sardinia. It embodied much of what Colet had preached, and of what More was then writing in his Utopia, and was written about the time that Machiavelli wrote his *Prince*, which taught that the Christian standard of morals would not work in political affairs.

Erasmus took up a position diametrically opposed to that which Machiavelli elaborated. There was no divorce between religion and life. There was no distinction between things religious and secular. The Christian, acting under the spirit of the Golden Rule, applies it to his working out of political and social economy, and does not end his religious duties by a routine of observances, but in the full discharge of all the obligations under which he is placed. This he taught to Prince Charles.

He insisted that he must regard himself as a Christian Prince. He must make himself useful to his people as a true father should. The good of the people must have precedence even over the royal prerogative, for it was consent, not force which made a prince. His great aim should be to reduce taxation, if necessary by personal economy, and certainly by dismissing idle ministers, avoiding wars, and securing the right administration of revenues. Where taxation was inevitable, every

consideration should be given to the poor, and means should be taken which would prevent the wealth of the multitude from getting into few hands. In any case, as far as possible, taxation should not be imposed upon the things in common use among the lowest classes, but upon those things which contributed to luxury and pleasure, and used only by the rich. He taught concerning crime, and its prevention, and punishment, as More did, and his hatred of war finds full expression. "A good Prince," he wrote, "will never enter upon any war at all unless after trying all possible means it cannot be avoided." He proposed two substitutes for war—disputes should be referred to arbitration; and Princes should cultivate the disposition to concede a point rather than to insist upon it at far greater cost than the thing is worth. His personal appeal to Charles was: "Christ founded a bloodless Empire. He wished it always to be bloodless. He delighted to call Himself the 'Prince of Peace.' May He grant likewise that by your good offices, and by your wisdom, there may be a cessation at last from the maddest of wars."

Such was Erasmus, one of the greatest teachers of any age, and he was this because he set Jesus in the midst of everything. Colet had taught him to do that, and he spread the knowledge of it throughout the world. At the time it was written, the *Christian Prince* would appear to have little chance of rivalling the *Prince* of Machiavelli. But a century later, Hugo Grotius, the father of the modern international system, rejected in the name

of Europe the Machiavellian theory as unworkable, and adopted the Christian theory as the only one sanctioned by the laws of nature, and upon which the polity of the civilized world could be safely founded. Writing of this, Wheaton, in his *Elements of International Law*, says: "Whatever may be thought of the long-disputed question as to Machiavelli's motive in writing, his work certainly presents to us a gloomy picture of the state of public law and European society in the beginning of the 16th century: one mass of dissimulation, crime, and corruption, which called loudly for a great teacher and reformer to arise, who should speak the unambiguous language of truth and justice to princes and people; and stay the ravages of this moral pestilence. Such a teacher and reformer was Hugo Grotius who was born in the latter part of the same century, and flourished in the beginning of the 17th. He was one of those powerful minds which have paid the tribute of their assent to the truth of Christianity." The magnificence of such a stupendous reform is beyond computation. In this alone the seeds sown by Erasmus bore a wonderful harvest.

Thomas More—The Dreamer of a Great Dream

It is probable that Colet had known More from his childhood. It is certain that they were both pupils of Linacre and Grocyn at Oxford. More was the son of a successful lawyer, and possessed of such great gifts that Colet came to speak of him as the one genius of whom England could

learn. And Erasmus, who was made known to him in 1498, so loved him that a year later he could write: "Whenever did nature mould a character more gentle, endearing, and happy than Thomas More." Called to the bar, More began to lecture on the theme that if Christianity had been adopted by the people and rulers of the old Roman Empire, and carried out in practice in their lives, the old Pagan Empire might have been saved and become a truly Christian one. Entering Parliament, he opposed and overthrew the King's demands for financial grants, and had to retire into seclusion. At this critical juncture Colet exercised a powerful influence on his thought and mode of life, and his plan of becoming a monk was abandoned.

The accession of Henry the Eighth restored More to favour and a position of great importance in the city. It was during this period, and while resting at More's house, that Erasmus wrote his *Praise of Folly*. The passing years increased More's power, but they brought increasing responsibility. Henry's war expenditure; leading to the taxation of the labourer and the attempt to reintroduce the Statutes of Labourers—and the enclosures and evictions by the landowners—precipitated a crisis, and produced More's *Utopia*. While Erasmus, under the influence of Colet, was rediscovering the Gospels and the Epistles, More, under the same influence, was giving expression to what he conceived to be the Christian programme of reform.

The *Utopia* was a description of an imaginary Commonwealth on the island of Utopia—Nusquama

—or Nowhere, and it was written with special reference to English politics. It contained a biting satire of the way in which international treaties were broken outside Utopia, and denounced war as brutal "although practised more eagerly by man than by any other animal." More's heart had been deeply stirred by Henry's passion for war, and the way in which every interest had been sacrificed to satisfy it—the burdens it entailed, the social evils it brought to the surface, the way in which the interests of the poor had been sacrificed to spare the pockets of the rich, the taxing of the labourer's wages and the attempts to reduce them—and all this found expression in his story. His aim and dream was a true community—not a rich and educated aristocracy on the one hand and a poor and ignorant peasantry on the other—but one people, well to do, and educated throughout. In Utopia every child was well educated.

His views on social economy were equally broad and fearless. He decried the increase in the abundance of luxuries, the amassing of vast wealth in a few or even royal hands, and sought by spreading the burden of labour more evenly, and the abolition of all idle classes including the friars, to lessen the hours of labour to the working man. Living as he did in Bucklersby, surrounded by the filth of London's narrow streets, in which the houses of the poor—unclean, unventilated, with clay floors—were the breeding places of pestilence, More pictured Utopia as its opposite. It had wide streets, waterworks and hospitals, and its houses were well

built, well lit by windows, and each house had a garden. Utopia would not tolerate a slum!

But Utopia was not a material paradise only. It depended for its very existence on a special tone and temper. An "intention" was insisted upon as the essential of its coming into being, and of its being maintained. The end of life was that it should be a delight, but life could only be a delight when every man lived in the spirit of the Golden Rule. There was no room in Utopia for selfishness, or vanity, or shame, or sensuality, or any excess; but neither was there any call for wasting "the body by fasting, or to reject the delights of life, unless by so doing a man can serve the public or promote the happiness of others."

Religion in Utopia was never divorced from science, and was broadly tolerant. Man was free to belong to any religion, but he must not use force to propagate it. Truth would ultimately prevail. Priests were few, and might be of either sex, and were elected by ballot. It was even a point of dispute among Christians whether they could not elect and train their own priests in Utopia apart from papal authority. Side by side with wide latitude of belief was a mode of worship in which all could unite. In spacious temples all sects met to engage in a form of prayer and worship so arranged that no offence was offered to any man's conception of God, and so expressive of a common brotherhood that none could enter into it cherishing hate or anger in his heart. Hymns of praise were sung, and prayers for the happiness of the Common-

wealth were offered, and all was accompanied by a desire to be led into the fullness of truth. When it is remembered that this book was written in or about 1515 it is not surprising that More should conclude: "I freely confess that many things in the Commonwealth of Utopia I rather wish than hope to see adopted in our own."

A year later he wrote the introduction in which his allusions to the social conditions of England, and the policy of Henry, were more pointed. As he expected shortly to enter Henry's service himself, his railings at so many things is all the more remarkable, as he must have known they would come under Henry's notice. The gentry who lived at ease out of the labour of others; those guilty of enclosures and ejections, driving honest men, and women, and children, into vagabondage; extravagances of all kinds, and evils such as tippling houses, taverns, and all dens of iniquity, were mercilessly castigated. "Let these pernicious plagues be rooted out," he wrote. "Enact that those who destroy agricultural hamlets or towns should rebuild them, or give them up to those who will do so. Restrain these engrossings of the rich, and the license of exercising what is in fact a monopoly. Let fewer persons be bred up in idleness. Let tillage farming be restored. Let the woollen manufacture be introduced, so that honest employment may be found for those whom want has already made into thieves, or who, being now vagabonds or idle retainers, will become thieves ere long. Surely if you do not remedy these evils, your rigorous execution of justice in

punishing thieves will be in vain, which indeed is more specious than either just or efficacious. For verily if you allow your people to be badly educated, their morals corrupted from childhood, and then, when they are men, punish them for the very crimes to which they have been trained from childhood, what is this, I ask, but first to make the thieves, and then to punish them."

Such was the contribution of this lover of Jesus to the political and social thinking of all time.

Thus, three men, a preacher, a writer, and a man of great affairs, in a critical period in the history of Christendom, set before their world a thorough and comprehensive system of ecclesiastical, political, and social reform. In their various ways they sought to recover Jesus and His teachings from the mass of dogmatism which had gathered about Him, and to set Him forth as the central hope and strength of all human progress. They showed by sermon, and Gospel, and romance, that Christianity, carried into the practice of nations and lives, would mean, "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." They strove after ecclesiastical and theological reform, but that was only a part of their striving. They demanded freedom of thought, and inquiry, and a fuller knowledge, but that was only a part of their demand. They were out for the ending of all war, and they knew that such a consummation could only come through a reform of life, and as that was reformed by the spirit of Jesus.

They believed that nothing less than the Golden

Rule was equal to meeting the demands of a free and contented society. Nothing less than that could conquer political and social tyranny, or extirpate vice and selfishness, or bring the minds of all men to recognize that the good of the whole people as one community should be the object of all legislation. And the observance of the Golden Rule was dependent upon a knowledge of, and a communion with, the Master whose spirit alone could give it life and power. They taught this because they believed it would work. They taught it because they believed that without it there could never be a true brotherhood of man, nor a true international spirit. They opposed the Christian to the Machiavellian code, and over against selfishness and greed they set selflessness and service. When the peoples were settling down to live at the break-up of Charlemagne's Empire, the Canonists had sought to give them guidance by the elaboration of an ethical programme. Now that the world was stirring in another of its great birth-throes, these great reformers offered it a knowledge of a spirit and a power by which alone the ethic could be understood and kept.

They failed to win what they sought to win. Great as the influence of Erasmus was, when the time for decision came both Emperor and Pope refused reform; and powerful as Colet and More were in England, they were not able to enact all they hoped. Fifteen months after Colet's death, Luther, concentrating his energies on a narrower point, sounded a challenge that shook the world,

and for three centuries the course of reform was determined by other hands. But, despite any later wavering, of Erasmus and More, the spirit of their work, and of the great master spirit of Colet which had inspired them both, lived on in England and wrought mightily. If the objects sought were not so widely flung in their range; if the courses of thought were cramped by Confessions and Creeds; if policies both social and political lost some of their grandeur, the spirit never ceased to work.

These battle-scarred centuries gave us religious and civil liberties, a purified faith, and the right of private judgment, but they did not leave untouched the social and industrial environment in which men lived. The spirit of a true social reform, based upon a fellowship in Jesus, is seen in Luther, and still more in Calvin; it was instinct in John Knox, and Hampden, and Milton, and Cromwell; it shone through the endeavours of many of the despised and obscure sects of the 17th century, and made the Quakers social reformers from the beginning. George Fox, William Penn, John Bellers, and John Woolman, are names that will ever live because of their intense interest in, and service for, the poor. And when the battle for civil and religious liberty had been won, the spirit that moved in Colet and his friends began to claim its place once more.

CHAPTER X.

The Stones on Which We Build.

IT is not difficult to understand why Puritanism failed to achieve its political aims. It was not the first time that the attempt had been made to set up the Kingdom of God on earth by force, and in the nature of the case all such attempts are foredoomed to failure. It was a great experiment, and in its course it flung up many unforgettable men and started many imperishable movements. If it did not survive as a government, it remained as an influence. It gave the world its greatest allegory in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and its greatest epic in *Paradise Lost*. But its greatest gift was to make the Bible the Book of the English people. The work of Coverdale and Tyndale was destined to have greater issues than that of Cromwell.

The reading of this Book affected speech and literature, but it affected character even more. Some of its interpretations and applications were full of chill and gloom, and some of the doctrines evolved were forbidding and arbitrary, but when these passed the spirit was a permanent possession.

Forms of government might change; kings might come back and new despotisms be set up; learning might take on a sceptical cast, and industry forge new fetters of servitude; but the spirit of man was changed. He would never again be the serf he had been. He was the child of God and a member of a brotherhood in Christ, and these ennobled him. He would have to work out his social salvation with fear and trembling but his foundation was sure. He would have to suffer the scorn and revulsion of the Restoration, and feel the undertow of the reaction which always follows release from a rigid imposition, but the figure of Jesus grew greater in the process. He would have to meet the rationalizing of science and the attack on tradition, but these would leave the Master still in the midst. He would suffer persecution and expulsion, and be the victim of tests and ostracisms, but they would only drive him to a greater loyalty to his central hope. Nothing that happened after Cromwell's death destroyed what had been won before Cromwell died. Man now knew who he was, what he was, and what he might become, in and through Jesus Christ his Saviour and his Friend. How greatly he needed that knowledge is proved by the battles he had to fight, and the endurance he had to display.

In the Depths: The Country.

The revolution of 1688, which set the seal on civil liberty, created at the same time a new power in England which had tremendous consequences

for the poor. It raised the landed aristocracy to a position of unassailable strength, and they used it with a ruthlessness which changed the lives and fortunes of many, and wrought untold misery. The story of this revolution of the countryside is told by J. H. and Barbara Hammond in *The Village Labourer*, and is one of the most moving ever written. Between 1760 and 1844 about one-third of the cultivable land of England had been enclosed, warranted by the passing of nearly 4,000 Enclosure Acts, and it has been estimated that a further million acres have been enclosed since that time. This meant that the ancient community system with rights of pasturage and tillage in common fields, and on commons and wastes, was wiped out. How widespread this community farming had been is seen from the fact that in the middle of the 17th century three-fifths of the land in cultivation was tilled in this way. The 18th century enclosures completed the work begun in the 15th, continued during the 16th with less regularity, and emphasized in 1774 by the repeal of the Act of Elizabeth which enacted that no cottage should be built without four acres of land, nor should more than one family be permitted to live in one house.

It is admitted that under the old system there was much waste. It is true that the rapid increase of population, and the boycott and blockade by France during the Napoleonic Wars, made an improved tillage and an increased production of food a necessity. It is unquestioned that the

addition of ten thousand square miles of land to cultivation, and the improved methods of tillage, added vast resources to the food and wealth of England. In his *Social England*, Mr. R. E. Prothero says that "the wastes and commons were a standing reproach to the rural economy of the country, and were capable of being turned to more profitable use in the hands of enterprising individuals." That cannot be gainsaid, but the price had to be paid, and the poor were called upon to pay it.

The Suffolk squire, Arthur Young, who travelled much in France before and after the Revolution, and whose treatises were the great authority on tillage, confessed that nineteen out of twenty Enclosure Acts injured the poor. "To pass Acts," he wrote in 1801, "beneficial to every class in the State, and hurtful to the lowest class only when the smallest alteration would prevent it, is a conduct against which reason, justice, and humanity equally plead." But that alteration was never made. Lord Carrington, Minister for Agriculture in 1907, declared that while the benefits were enormous, the policy of the Acts was "directed towards the enhancement of agricultural rents, the building up of large compacted estates, the establishment of capitalist farming, the uprooting of peasant proprietors and of smallholders, together with the communal holding of land, and the multiplication of landless and agricultural labourers." Mr. and Mrs. Hammond sum up the result in these searching words: "The peasant, with rights and a status makes way for the labourer, with no corporate

rights to defend, no corporate power to invoke, no property to cherish, no ambition to pursue, bent beneath the fear of his masters and the weight of a future without hope. No class in the world has so beaten and crouching a history."

The Black Death had marked the emergence of the serf into something approaching freedom, and from that time on until the early and later enclosures, and the legislation relating to work and wages, the position of the agricultural population had improved. The new order plunged it into poverty, destitution and despair, and finally established itself by making the English people the most landless in the world.

In the Depths: The Town.

This revolutionary change in the agricultural life of England was accompanied by a change in industry quite as revolutionary, and equally impoverishing to the landless and the poor. The inventions of Watt, Hargreaves, Crompton, and Arkwright, and the introduction of the factory system, ruined the small trader who worked at home, marketed his own goods, and lived in humble but contented economic freedom. The consumption of raw cotton in the mills of Lancashire rose during this period from fifty to a hundred millions of pounds. The foundation of modern industrial England was laid in towns and cities which grew swiftly, with little thought for sanitation or health, and none for beauty. The rapid increase of population, and the flooding of the labour market

through the destruction of the domestic trades and the Enclosures Acts, made labour plentiful, and the greed of the opportunist forced it to be cheap. The rise in the price of wheat, caused by the wars which cut England off from the wheat fields of America and the Continent, while it enriched landlords and farmers wrought fearful havoc among the poor. The beating down of wages made possible by the surplusage of labour, and the crushing burden of indirect taxation which fell with cruel impact upon those least able to bear it, led to a pauperization as terrible as it was unnecessary. Side by side with an enormously growing wealth was a degradation of poverty, a soulless exploitation of men and women and children, a brutal disregard for the commonest of humanities, which bred crime born of desperation, and disease the child of dirt and destitution, appalling in its nature and extent.

How much of this fierce grasping of wealth on the part of the favoured was due to the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776 cannot be computed. It is certain that the book, by its luminous treatment of the laws of production, did more than any other book in the English language to increase our national resources and wealth. In his *Economic Studies*, Bagehot says that "no other form of political philosophy has ever had one-thousandth part of the influence upon us; its teachings have settled down into the common sense of the nation, and have been irreversible." In this book Smith gathered up the best thought of those who had gone before and anticipated much that

came after him. He converted England to Free Trade, although he did not believe that conversion to be possible. He declared the original source of all wealth to be labour, and asserted that labour should be free, untrammelled by local legislation or national law; and he approved the right of the workers to combine for the securing of better wages and shorter hours. He taught that labour should be well rewarded for "as it is the effect of increasing wealth, so it is the cause of increasing population. To complain of it is to lament over the necessity and cause of the greatest public prosperity."

Many of these exhortations were ignored, and his teaching that self-interest was the chief motive in human affairs was seized upon and exploited to the fullest degree. This did Smith a great wrong for his doctrine of self-interest was intended to be understood by his teaching on the Golden Rule contained in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1759. If the moral sentiments of that book do not find a commanding place in the *Wealth of Nations* they are assumed, for his belief is stated that the individual seeking his own interest will at the same time promote the common weal. That belief was not justified. He taught free trade, free labour, and free contract, but liberty was abused, and the doctrines of self-interest and competition were employed against the poor. Smith believed in a beneficent government of the world but he overlooked the fact that an unregenerated human nature could hinder it. Before the wealth of a nation can become the wealth in a nation the

moral sentiments which he recognized and urged must be a part of the moral equipment of the individual.

The New Advance.

The opening of the 19th century thus saw the stage set for the playing out of another great act in the drama of human life. The operation of the Enclosures Acts, and the swift rise of a new industrialism, created a change as important as those brought about by the barbarian invasion and the break-up of Charlemagne's Empire. Once more the interplay of interest had been revolutionary, and once more there was need for a standard of adjustment. The stage was a little island, and the episode to be played out was not between kings or faiths, but concerning the relations between men. The battle for liberty had been won, and now the battle was that it should not be abused. Liberty had amassed colossal wealth and created grinding poverty and a soul devastating pauperism; it had founded great estates and built lordly mansions and made possible slums and foul and loathsome contagious diseases; it had opened the doors of travel, refinement, and luxury for the few, and shut the many into a slavery in factory and pit and field, and crowded them in workhouses and prisons. There was little wonder that riot and crime disturbed the quiet and order of the time. But riot and crime found no solution. Reform was needed, but it was a reform of sentiment which would result in the reformation of law; not

the imposition of law which it was hoped would reform sentiment. And once again, facing now a harder task than ever, having to break the grossest vice of greed, Jesus stands out as the fount and hope of reform.

The difficulty was made the greater because the new order of self-interest, and fullness of liberty to exploit every situation as it arose, was accepted as inevitable by many Christian thinkers. Political economy was regarded as something apart from Christian ethics, and while there was an abundance of sympathy for the victims in this new warfare of the survival of the fittest, and the law of supply and demand, the system was looked upon as natural and right. There was an almost total departure from the standpoint of the Canonists and the Oxford Reformers, and a soulless utilitarianism held the field. Business was business, and religion and philanthropy were something else—a hospital for the curing or care of the wounded in the struggle, but not a panacea for the removal of the cause of the suffering. The plunderers themselves were often held to be justified in their plundering if their subscriptions in aid of the wrecks were sufficiently generous and frequent. There was a flagrant general misunderstanding of the precepts of Christianity, although there was a wealth of sympathy for the victims of a false order. But there was still a witness to the truth, and once more it began to exercise its power. Smith himself had borne this witness. He had imbibed the spirit of the Canonists and the Reformers, and in furnishing an

instrument he had suggested a dynamic which could make it the blessing he intended it to be.

John Stuart Mill indicated the course the reform movement must take when in 1848 he wrote: "The social problem of the future would be how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw materials of the globe and an equal participation of all the benefits of combined labour." He recognized what More had taught long before, that the greatness of a nation does not consist in the number of its great landowners and capitalists, but in the general well-being of all its people—the absence of poverty, the education of children, the healthiness of dwellings, and the enjoyment of the means of life. It began to be glimpsed that liberty did not give a man the license of a savage, or a prize-fighter, or a pick-pocket, to exercise his strength or his skill without regard to the rights of life, freedom, equality, property, and happiness of others. It was seen that an unrestrained self-interest generated antagonism to the family, the municipality, and the nation, and that an unfettered competition could be little better than "administrative nihilism." Liberty, self-interest, and competition, unchecked by an adequate motive, led to catastrophe. They converted men into "hands," the cogs of a machine, implements for the making of wealth, and paid no heed to their being possessed of intellects, feelings, wills, and consciences, demanding to be considered. It came to be recognized that economics was not the "dismal science" the first half of

the 19th century proclaimed it to be, but an ethical science, and that its real inspiration lay in the moral and spiritual nature of man. As will be seen, that revolution in thought, slow as all such high revolutions are, was due to the teaching of those who saw Jesus high and lifted up.

The Methodist Preparation.

One of the greatest preparations for the reception and fostering of the new economic policy was the work done by Methodism. Methodism averted a revolution by working a revolution. It has been charged with being unfavourable to working-class movements in its later history, but where that is true it is mainly true of its official leaders, and even then only true in part. It should be remembered that the shadow of the French Revolution lay across England, and that Wesley himself was far too practical and conservative, great social reformer though he was, to encourage anything that savoured of political agitation. As it was the movement came under suspicion as being both political and seditious. If Wesley had been a political firebrand instead of a religious statesman; if he had incited men to revolt instead of to repentance; if he had sought to build up factions out for the overturning of the social order instead of societies for the cultivation of the spiritual life, he would not have found it difficult to rouse England to a frenzy. It is idle to speculate upon what that would have meant. What is certain is that by the end of the 18th century England had been stirred to its heart.

A new leaven was at work among the people and a new social conscience was in process of formation. All the great social reformers had postulated the necessity of a moral and spiritual consent before their Utopias could be realized. Those who had tried to impose an ethic on a protesting human nature had failed. Methodism gave to England a new sense of the worth of the individual life, a new conception of the brotherhood in Christ, a new understanding of the duties involved in relationship, and created an atmosphere in which the greatest of all revolutions could be worked out without anarchy or catastrophe. And Methodism did these things because of its passionate loyalty to the teaching of Jesus.

But, as John Richard Green points out: "The Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival." Its by-products were to be found everywhere, and reacted in every direction. The clergy of the Church of England felt the cleansing and the quickening. Many of the vices which had lingered from the Restoration were swept out of society by the moral enthusiasm which it generated. It led to an organized attempt to convert the profligate and to care for the oppressed and the poor. It was the inspiration of a new philanthropy which worked for the education of children, the healing of the sick, the reform of prisons, and the liberation of the slave. Many of the later by-products would hardly ascribe to the Methodist revival the impulse which made them reformers, but they were of its spirit. If organized

Methodism did not lend itself to the active support of political agitation for the redressing of glaring wrongs, it created what was important to the success of all such movements, an atmosphere in which they could grow. And if its official leaders refrained from active participation there were many whose Methodism made them the pioneers of great and outstanding reforms.

The Preacher.

In *The Village Labourer* there are the records of a few voices that were raised in the wilderness before the century turned, and these would be but typical of many others. The rector of Birdingbury, the rector of Barham, Berks., the vicar of Dunmow in Essex, the rector of Broad Somerford in Wilts., protested by pamphlet and book, as well as by speech against the dispossession of the agricultural labourer without adequate compensation and consideration for his future. They were the sowers of seed under a wintry sky, but they did not sow in vain. The first co-operative society for the benefit of the poor, the first savings bank, and the first Friendly Society, were originated by Christian men and women, seeking to help the needy and to encourage thrift and provident living.

One of the greatest voices of the 18th century was that of the Rev. Dr. Richard Price (1723-1791). He opposed the wars with America and with France, and called upon his head the condemnation of Burke. He was the champion of civil liberty, of education, of national thrift, of old age pensions,

and of international arbitration for the settlement of disputes. Dr. Price was a Nonconformist minister as was the Rev. Robert Hall (1764-1831), another mighty advocate of social reform. He saw the tremendous truth that victory in war settles nothing, and brings little but misery in its train. He championed and was largely instrumental in securing freedom of speech and of the Press which meant more to social reform than can be estimated. His assistance to the Leicestershire Frame-work Knitters Union, in defiance of the Combination Acts, and his advocacy of a legal minimum wage prove that he sought to give practical application to the Christian principles which he so passionately espoused and preached. Again these were but typical voices sounding out a clarion call for a new order. And all of them were calling upon a people whose sense of worth and responsibility was ripening into a new value.

The Poet.

But the work was not confined to clergymen, Methodist preacher, and Nonconformist divine. Poets, despite the criticism that they are impracticable dreamers have their place as inspirational forces, and no greater service was ever rendered to social reform than was given by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. They reached a constituency which, if not large, was influential, and produced results of the greatest consequence. They were Christian men, deeply conscious of their social responsibility, profoundly moved by the

spirit of Jesus in their estimate of relationship, and they poured out their hearts in their prose and verse.

Wordsworth (1770-1850) set the value of a human life so high that he impugned in scathing terms the industrial system which left men to starve through no fault of their own. He taught what the great Canonists had taught, scorning an economic ideal which worshipped wealth built up on the tragic toll taken from the lives of men, women, and little children. He saw the time coming when men would recognize "that all true glory rests, all praise, all safety, and all happiness, upon the moral law." The flame of his passion glowed in his love of nature and the beautiful in life, and the right of every man to enjoy it. Almost every word he wrote was an indirect assault upon the brutalities of a system which denied to man the opportunity of knowing them.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was honoured by his generation for what he was as a philosopher, poet, and critic, and ignored for what he was most of all, a prophet of economic reform. He taught fearlessly, and in direct opposition to the prevailing theories, that a nation should be ruled by the spirit and letter of Christianity. The craze for wealth vulgarized everything, and nothing but religion could cure it. He regarded the current political economy as a solemn humbug, and declared that pure reason would think of democracy as a Church, and that its government would seek not only to protect life but to enrich it by equitable

dealing, and affording the fullest opportunity for full individual well-being and betterment. He regarded it as a false conception of State where these things were made secondary to wealth and revenue, and looked upon the calling of all men equal, when they were denied the opportunities of a good education, a mockery. There is no wonder that Coleridge, like many great imaginative Christian thinkers before him, was thought to be madly out of joint. He was a sower, and his seed was not all flung on stony ground.

Robert Southey (1777-1842) roused Macaulay as Dr. Price had roused Burke, but that did not lessen his contempt for, and condemnation of, the prevailing non-Christian economy, and those who upheld it. There is a spark of real Methodist fire in his assertions that "what is spiritual affects man more than what is material," and that "for effective reform a degree of generous and virtuous excitement is required which nothing but religious feeling can call forth." That degree of generous and virtuous excitement was being cultivated, and was to play its part in securing the reforms which followed. By pen and deed, Southey, in obedience to the strong and unflinching faith that was in him, sought to set right what he believed to be socially wrong.

There were others who, if not directly under the same inspiration, gave expression to similar views. Blake and Shelley exerted a wide influence on the thought of their time. They represent thousands who having received a reflected light transmit it again with a new brilliance. They could not have

thought and written as they did had they not been the recipients of a diffused Christian teaching, and while they do not name the Name as above every name they show forth His spirit as that has to do with the relations between men. But when we turn from these to the rugged and searching analysis of a man like Thomas Carlyle we are back on the old ground of a man who speaks out of the fullness of his own heart.

The Prophet.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) had no need to be told of the sorrows of the poor. He knew them, and he knew that they would never be remedied except by a moral and ethical reformation. He literally shocked the England that counted into realizing that, rich as it was, its working population was sinking into a poverty almost without parallel. He had the true prophet's vision which saw, what is now being more fully realized, that the worker must be a co-partner in industry, and share in the responsibility as well as the profits of his work. It is impossible to measure the influence of this one man. His books found their way into the humblest homes where the spirits of men had been prepared for the doctrine he had to teach. Thousands of candles were lit at his flaming torch, and some of them, acknowledging him guide and leader with Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Southey, sent its rays up and down the land.

It is impossible to think without a thrill of the work done in the middle of the 19th century by

that brilliant band of men who were inspired by the poets and Carlyle—F. D. Maurice, J. M. Ludlow, and Tom Hughes. If they did not succeed in establishing production on a co-operative basis they proved that spiritual power was necessary as the driving force for the application of Christian principles. And by pen and voice—by pamphlet and novel, and by sermon and speech—they prepared the minds and hearts of men for the coming of the day. They had to run the gauntlet of sharp and bitter criticism, and they were not spared an even more active persecution, but they laid foundations which remain, and they sowed ideas which are now beginning to bear fruit. They held great and advanced social theories but they were under no illusions about the need of human nature. They recognized that the realization of the one was dependent upon the other having been met. That could only be when the truth of the Golden Rule was the accepted guide and inspiration of action.

These were men whose influence ran in circles above the lower level. They were leavening that part of the lump least accessible to the influence of the very poor, and most in opposition to their pretensions, and the leaven worked. It is seen in such widely different men as John Stuart Mill, Lord Shaftesbury, and John Ruskin. These stand out by reason of their great eminence but there must have been many who were similarly impressed. Some accepted the theories, wholly or in part, without recognizing any necessity for the dynamic which inspired them—as many do to-day—and

wondered why they could not operate. They forgot that the Golden Rule is more than a theory of action, and did not understand that it can never be carried out until it is the expression of devotion to a Person.

The People.

But the 18th and 19th centuries saw the rising of an order of reformers who belonged to the people and who remained with them. They were of Puritan and Methodist stock, and their conclusions about the dignity of life and the rights of man were reached through an intimate contact with Jesus, and not by philosophic speculation and analysis. They knew that neither the negative, "Thou shalt not steal," nor the positive, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," could be practised unless both were preceded by obedience to the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." If they seemed to stress the third of these precepts more than the first and second it was not because they failed to recognize their importance, but because they knew the sequence of operations. They were like good gardeners who spend much time in clearing the ground before they plant their seeds. That their plan was sound has been proved again and again. It was the physical force Chartists who ruined that movement.

The Puritan and the Methodist were everywhere. They knew the conditions of the people and they sought to improve them. It is a grotesque misrepresentation to say that the Churches failed in

their duty without full recognition being given to these sons and daughters of the people, whose love of Jesus caused them to build their Houses of Prayer, and whose love of humanity expressed itself in such self-sacrificing service. They believed in and preached a gospel of reform which began in the soul of man and ended in the reformation of the State. They understood the soundest of all political doctrines that you cannot successfully legislate ahead of public opinion, and they knew that the only public opinion adequate for the reforms they craved must be of a moral and spiritual nature.

That is not to say that they were blind to the immediate opportunity for they seized upon it with passion. The best of the Chartists were of this stock, and always against physical force. William Lovett, the principal composer of the famous Charter, was a Cornish Methodist local preacher, and urged the substitution of a graduated income tax for indirect taxation. Samuel Bamford, who wrote *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, which gives, as Dr. Smiles says, "a truer insight into the life of the political conditions of the English people in recent times, than all the lives of the political leaders put together," owed much to Methodism, and served his generation with passionate abandon. Thomas Cooper, who began as a Methodist and became a Baptist, used his great gifts in the advocacy of a new social order, attracting the attention of Dickens and Disraeli, and becoming the model for Kingsley's *Alton Locke*. Rayner Stephens, a fiery

enthusiast for social reform, was the son of a Methodist president, and for some years a Methodist preacher himself.

These men are but examples of those who stood out from their fellows. There were thousands of lesser-known men in the van, inspired by the same motive, and fighting under the same Leader. They gave themselves with unswerving devotion to causes which brought about factory reform, poor-law reform, education reform, and political reform. They fought the battle for trade-unionism, and in its earliest days they supplied it with officers. So swayed were they by the influence of their Master that it was not uncommon for them to begin their lodge meetings with prayer.

How many of the knights of this new chivalry refreshed themselves at the fountain opened up by Carlyle, and Carlyle's greatest social disciple, John Ruskin, it is impossible to say. *Unto this Last*, published in 1861, began a new era in economic thinking, and Ruskin's conception of society and industrialism as moral, and to be governed by Christian principles, fired the imagination of thousands. He was as great a Canonist as any, although in his dealing with relations he stressed principles rather than details. But details were not forgotten. He anticipated many a reform in wages, pensions, and the improvement of agricultural conditions. Mr. J. A. Hobson, in his *John Ruskin: Social Reformer*, says: "He has laid the solid foundation of social economics; his work will hereafter be recognized as the first serious attempt in England

to establish a scientific basis of economic study from the social standpoint." Ruskin's inspiration was profoundly Christian, and he, in turn, has been the inspiration to a study of Christian social reform of a great and innumerable host.

The Final Hope.

It is not surprising that Society has known an intensely individualistic stage. It was inevitable. There was everything to stimulate it and little to check it. The only corrective it received was that supplied by the teachings of Jesus as they were set forth by His disciples. Nor is it surprising that in a so-called Christian society the cultivation of a truly Christian social conscience should have been a slow and painful one. Everything is relative, and while there have been many nominal followers, disciples have been less numerous. That is not to say that following, even where it has not been fruitful of social reform, has been barren. Following Jesus, even afar off, has changed the life of England, and prepared a suitable soil for the harvest that is yet to be reaped, and without which it could never be grown. The profounder social changes call for a strengthened social conscience, and that is not of quick growth, and is subject, as all such growths are, to reactions. And, paradoxical as it may seem, it is dependent for its growth upon the intensest kind of individualism. The truest social conscience is never known by man until he has realized himself in Christ. The Golden Rule has an impoverished meaning until it is illuminated

and interpreted by the spirit of Him who came to seek, and to save, and to serve.

Jesus has been the inspiration of reform through all the ages. The generations have seen Him differently, taught Him differently, emphasized Him differently, but the result, despite error and imperfection of interpretation, has been a gain in the standard of life, in the understanding of relationship, and in the sense of social duty. He is still the challenge to the thought and heart of mankind, and He has no rival who can compare with Him in what He promises for the future of mankind. He is the Prince of Peace who can guarantee peace to those who believe in Him and become men of goodwill, and beside Him there is none else who can guarantee the one or produce the other. He is the hope of the world because He is the Light of the World, and the Light shines more brightly to-day than ever it did. The past teaches the present that it is in Him, and through Him, that man becomes free, and free to serve, and that in that service there is fullness of life. Because He has been lifted up Augustine dreamt of his *City of God*, More of his *Utopia*, and Ruskin of a new economic order; Aquinas sought to curb selfishness, Colet preached peace and purity of life, and the Puritans broke down the tyranny of despots. Time and time again, because of Him, the impossible has been done—barbarians have been subdued, slaves have been freed, civil rights have been won. Time and time again, because He has been in the midst, the unbelievable miracle has been performed.

The power that has thus conquered will not fail before an individualism however rank, or gross with greed.

In this Island Home of ours, and with our stock, there is a unique opportunity for the making of even greater experiments in His Name and by His Power. We have a more carefully prepared seed-bed than is to be found in any other race. We have a social conscience which is the reward of the faithful ministries of many centuries. We have a leadership that is instinct with the spirit of Him Whose we are and Whom we serve. But the task is still the same. It is to win men to Him that possessing His spirit they will seek to realize themselves as children of God, called to live together in a Christian Brotherhood, each man seeking to do unto others as he would that they should do unto him. It is because there are and ever will be disciples who are so striving, and who will never cease to strive, whatever reactions of temper the generations may bring, that we can sing :

> Blessings abound where'er He reigns ;
> The prisoner leaps to lose his chains ;
> The weary find eternal rest ;
> And all the sons of want are blessed.

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